The Kṣatriyas in Ancient India

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Madhumita Chatterji

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The book highlights the kaleidoscopic nature of the Indian society and the development of the caste system as an organic response to the requirements of this multiple society. The origin, life and legacy of the Kṣatriya caste are the central theme. The compelling charting of the romantic and adventurous journey of this caste through the various periods of Ancient Indian History illuminates their iconic life. The role of the Kṣatriyas as the ruling class, their relationship with other castes, their socio-economic and political activities and liabilities have been chronicled in detail bringing history to life. Special reference to the position of the Kṣatriya women adds a new dimension to the book. The book gives a better understanding of such fundamental topics as rise to power, charismatic leadership, theories of kingship, the position of women, socio-economic interface and decline of the supreme power associated with this enigmatic caste. The book is a synthesis of knowledge and insight from many sources hence offers a comprehensive picture.

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Dr. Madhumita Chatterji, a graduate of Sophia College, Bombay University, holds a Ph.D. in History from Jadavpur University, Kolkata, and has completed a programme in History, Politics and Society from Oxford University, where she was awarded the grade of excellence. She has published papers on Indian history, Indian ethos and management. As a senior faculty in various management institutes she has been involved in research and teaching of the relevance of Indian ethos and culture in the Management Processes. Her areas of interest also include Cross Cultural Management and Business Ethics.

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Madhumita Chatterji

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Preface

THE RICH HERITAGE of India has always fascinated me. The omnipresent caste system and its various components have goaded me to delve deeper into the problem and seek the real picture. To accomplish this end I have limited myself to the study of the Kṣatriya caste during a prescribed period, making a comprehensive study of this caste in every aspect.

I owe deep gratitude to my learned guides Dr. S.K. Maity and Dr. Shukla Das of Jadavpur University for their interest, inspiration and guidance throughout the duration of my work.

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MADHUMITA CHATTERJI

Kolkata
15 August 2006

Abbreviations

AB	*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*
ABOR	*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute,* Poona
AN	*Aṅguttaranikāya*
Āpa. Ds.	*Āpastamba Dharmasūtra*
Āpa. Gs.	*Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra*
Āpa. Ss.	*Āpastamba Śrautasūtra*
Arth.	*Arthaśāstra*
AR, ASI	*Annual Report*, Archaeological Survey of India
ASIM	Archaeological Survey of India, Memoirs
Āśv. Gṛ.	*Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra*
Āśv. Śs.	*Āśvalāyana Śrautrasūtra*
AV	*Atharvaveda*
Bau. Ds.	*Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra*
Bau. Gs.	*Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*
Bau. Śs.	*Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*
Bha. Gs.	*Bharadvāja Gṛhyasūtra*
Bha. Śs.	*Bharadvāja Śrautasūtra*
Bṛ. Up.	*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*
Ch. Up.	*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*
DN	*Dīghanikāya*
Gau. Ds.	*Gautama Dharmasūtra*
Gob. Gs.	*Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra*
Gop. Br	*Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*
Hir. Gs.	*Haraṇyakeśi Gṛhyasūtra*
Hir. Śs.	*Hiraṇyakeśi Śrautasūtra*
HOS	Harvard Oriental Series
IA	*Indian Antiquary*
IHQ	*Indian Historical Quarterly*
IHR	*Indian Historical Review*

JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JASB	*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay*
JBPP	*Journal of Bihar Purāvid Pariṣad*, Patna
JBRS	*Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, Patna
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Leiden
JIH	*Journal of Indian History*, Trivandrum
JOIB	*Journal of the Oriental Institute of Baroda*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
Kāt. Śs.	*Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra*
Kāṭh. Gs.	*Kāṭhaka Gṛhyasūtra*
Kau. Up.	*Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*
Lāṭ. Śr.	*Lāṭyāyana Śrautasūtra*
Mān. Gs.	*Mānava Gṛhyasūtra*
Mān. Śs.	*Mānava Śvautasūtra*
MI	*Man in India*
MN	*Majjhimanikāya*
MS	*Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā*
Pār. Gs.	*Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra*
PB	*Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa*
PE	Pillar Edict
PO	Poona Orientalist, Poona
PTS	Pāli Text Society
RE	Rock Edict
ṚV	*Ṛgveda*
Sāṅ. Gs.	*Sāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*
Sāṅ. Śs.	*Sāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra*
ŚB	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
SBB	Sacred Books of Buddhists
SBE	Sacred Books of the East
SMPRC	*Social and Military Position of the Ruling Class* (Hopkins)
SN	*Saṁyuttanikāya*
TA	*Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*
TB	*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*
TS	*Taittirīya Saṁhitā*
UNSI	*Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*
Vās. Ds.	*Vāsiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*
Vai. Gs.	*Vaikhānasa Gṛhyasūtra*
Viṣ. Ds.	*Viṣṇu Dharmasūtra*
VS	*Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*

Transliteration

अ—a	आ—ā	इ—i	ई—ī	उ—u
ऊ—ū	ऋ—ṛ	ए—e	ऐ—ai	ओ—o
औ—au	अं—ṁ	अः—ḥ		
क—ka	ख—kha	ग—ga	घ—gha	ङ—ṅa
च—ca	छ—cha	ज—ja	झ—jha	ञ—ña
ट—ṭa	ठ—ṭha	ड/ड़—ḍa	ढ/ढ़—ḍha	ण—ṇa
त—ta	थ—tha	द—da	ध—dha	न—na
प—pa	फ—pha	ब—ba	भ—bha	म—ma
य—ya	र—ra	ल—la	व—va	
श—śa	ष—ṣa	स—sa	ह—ha	
क्ष—kṣa	त्र—tra	ज्ञ—jña		

Chapter 1

Introduction

The kaleidoscopic nature of Indian society makes it an intriguing subject for research. A bird's eye-view of the important publications of ancient Indian history shows commendable progress in Indian historiography, but there are still adequate challenges to present and future historians to march on the road of discovery. "The association of India with wealth, magic and wisdom remained current for many centuries."[1] This attitude, however, began to change by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when two contrary attitudes became obvious. One was a total rejection of things Indian as non-modern and non-utilitarian and the other was the emphasis on exactly these values with great vehemence and romanticism. With the study of Indian classical language and literature new interpretations of Indian history emerged. However, most of the early histories are "'administrator's histories' concerned mainly with the rise and fall of dynasties and empires."[2] It was not till the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the social and cultural history of India was brought into focus.

Views on history have changed from age to age and the scientific, humanistic, rational, self-revelatory and interpretative concepts of history are no doubt twentieth century contributions. However, we must not forget that the original Greek word "istoria" or the Latin term "historia" which means learning by inquiry or investigation suggests that the desire for inquiry into the workings of the minds of kings and their ministers or of the people was recognised as the hallmark of historical writings long before the birth of Christ.[3] In the Indian context, we find mention of *itihāsa* in the *Nirukta* by Yāska who might have belonged to a period earlier than Pāṇini.[4] The term *iti-ha-āsa* etymologically means "so indeed it was" and it is interpreted as "talk, legend, history, traditional account of former events, and heroic history."[5]

In ancient India the stories of Devāpi, Śāntanu, Viśvakarman Bhauvana are termed as *itihāsa*. If this is coupled with the root sense of the word, then it would imply that *itihāsa* was originally understood to mean a past episode. It is actually with the *Arthaśāstra* that a wider connotation of history to embrace all possible areas of human interest—mundane and spiritual, real and imaginary, practical and speculative—became viable.[6] Hence in spite of considerable achievements in these fields much of Indian history, especially ancient history, remains to be tapped.

Ancient Indians did not leave too many clear accounts of their achievements for posterity. There is a need in India for books giving consecutive accounts of history. The dates and names of the principal kings and battles as well as authors have not been preserved chronologically. For a long time there were no writing materials that could be used for the production of books, as Indians appear not to have felt the necessity for them. Even centuries after such materials had become available they continued to do without them. Thus literature of all kinds suffered under this peculiar disability. However, by the time writing was introduced, Indians had already perfected a method unparalleled in the history of the world of handing down knowledge by memorising it. The ancient books constantly refer to texts existing only in the memory of those who had learnt them by heart. There was also a dearth of knowledge about necessary material for writing lengthy records. Hence there is a lacuna in historical records and the introduction of the personal bias of teachers as they handed down their knowledge.

It was the seagoing merchants of the seventh century BC, or perhaps eighth century BC,[7] who became acquainted with an alphabet originally invented and used by the pre-Semitic race now called Akkadians. This script was adapted and enlarged to suit the specific requirements of the Indian learned and colloquial dialects. This process of adaptation continued for about a thousand years, finally leading to the emergence of Brāhmī *lipi*, the sublime writing.[8]

Meterials for "immortalising" this *lipi* were discovered after the lapse of another long period. The bark or leaves of the *corypha* talipot palm was prepared so as to prevent their breaking. Then after a gap of another long period, ink was invented which could be rubbed over the scratchings to make the writing legible.[9] Thus a slow beginning in the production of books was made. This disparity between the acquisition of knowledge

and beginning of recorded facts obviously led to distortion of facts, introduction of unwanted material and biases arising out of the practices of the different periods of history. We can probably sum up the reasons for lack of proper recorded history as lack of curiosity about secular affairs, the preponderant influence of a fatalistic doctrine, the absence of a dynamic history, lack of a sense of homogeneity and a poverty in scientific outlook.[10]

It is true that since the need was not felt by the Vedic schools the discoveries were not made earlier. It was certainly not alluring to write an account of unreal transitory and temporal life meriting the title of history. The Brāhmaṇa intelligentsia were not interested in the tedious work of critically shifting material needed for the production of proper history. Besides, to the creative Brāhmaṇa mind, where accuracy predominated over imagination and fancy, and diligence over talent, history proved less attractive than philosophy and literature which provide ample scope for the display of creativity and merit.[11]

However, we must not forget that the priestly class was jealous of their knowledge and were exceedingly keen to keep the knowledge of the *mantras* on which the magic of the sacrifice depended to themselves, and were opposed to the method of writing which could prove dangerous to their exclusive privileges.

Therefore it is not surprising to find the oldest reference to writing in a tract called the *śilās* embodied in each of the thirteen dialogues which form the first chapter of the first division of the Suttantas or conversational discourses of the Buddha about 450 BC.[12] The oldest manuscripts on bark or palm-leaf known in India as well as earliest written stone and metal records, belong to the Buddhist period. On the contrary, earliest mention of writing in the voluminous priestly literature is in the *Vaśiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*.[13]

The above mentioned evidence is too meagre to rule out totally the fact that the priests of ancient India might have developed an alphabet of their own out of picture writing. It was on this indigenous alphabet that they grafted the borrowed letters. In fact Alexander Cunningham suggests that the alphabet was developed independently in India, unlike Rhys Davids who proposes that all available evidence tends to show that the Indian alphabet is not Aryan at all.[14] There is no need to go into the details of this controversy as it lies outside the scope of the present discussion. It suffices here to realise that a lacuna exists in historical evidence and for

several centuries interest in the past was severely circumscribed by a mythic view of life in which the cosmos was totally bereft of the spirit of rational enquiry.

Another drawback of early historical writings in India is the over dependence on priestly literature by the historians. Thus much of early history is reconstructed containing the biases and coloured interpretations of the self-proclaimed guardians of Indian culture, the Brāhmaṇas. Most of these works are religious in nature, hence historical evidence is often buried in myths and religious interpretations. Even secular literature like the Dharmasūtras had Brāhmaṇa writers and naturally contain their opinion. Thus the actual conditions are not truthfully depicted.

In spite of a deadening ultra-conservatism and efforts to negate reforms, Indian civilisation marched forward and evolved into a rich and complex one. The slow pace at which changes of all kinds have taken place has resulted in its continuity. However, it is in this continuity that we notice a strange disdain for history. This may be a result of the fact that Indian philosophy has always emphasized the Absolute at the expense of contingency, thus training the Indian intellectuals in that vein. The tradition of recording historical phenomena within a broad spectrum of time and space having an end in itself did not develop in ancient India. If history is understood significantly as a narrative of past events which aims not merely at discovering what happened but also at explaining it, it cannot be found in ancient India. This disdain for history is not peculiar to India but to other parts of the ancient world too, where the same trend can be traced, for example the Egyptian loath to think in terms of cause and effect or of trends that were observable in their own story or in those of neighbouring people in the ancient world.[15]

Indian kings while engraving their own panegyrics often overlooked historical evidence. So that royal and local chronicles are interwoven with myths and fables. This again shows the complications through which the modern historian has to tread, at times forcing him to base his hypothesis on deductions alone. This is well expressed by J. Naudou,[16] "The historians of India (fourth century BC) are reduced to the expedient of constructing its history on a foundation of grammatical examples."

History consists not merely in the organisation, collection and examination of material but also in its correct interpretation. Without this analysis of the mass of material presented to the historian, history will

degenerate into meaningless and barren recitation of a string of unrelated and uncoordinated facts and will cease to either inspire or instruct. No Indian historian should ignore the broad generalistations which should underline Indian historical research as a whole. While specialisation in a particular period of Indian history is an indispensable preliminary to the success of a historical treatise, we must keep before us the conception of Indian history as a whole. We must not divide ourselves into watertight compartments or classes. Though the subject here is concerned only with a specific period of Indian history, our aim is to represent the conception of India as a whole.

Historical research depends on the nature and variety of materials at our disposal and conclusions must be deduced logically and rationally from them. All matter must be inspired by the new sentiments which animate Indian history today. It is the spirit of a common Indian nationality basing itself on the fundamental unity of the Indian people and having its origin in the numerous forces—spiritual, intellectual and economic—which have fused various communities and classes, provinces and states, into an organic whole. The emergence of this sentiment in spite of anarchy and confusion, which has unhappily marred our development in some centuries, is the most encouraging sign of the present times. While history is the record of truth, we must remember it deals with the human organism, with its passions and prejudices, its subconscious impulses and lofty ideas as it is the story of human activities along with their environment. Our present achievements are linked up with our glorious past. Therefore we can never be dogmatic or offer authoritative decisions on any phenomenon. We can merely infer and suggest.

The use of evidence from a variety of different sources have both challenged and corroborated the earlier evidence. Examples of some of the "new" sources are the deciphering of contemporary inscriptions and coins. Foreign travellers like Megasthenes have left behind a rich source in their non-Indian records thus offering a new perspective. With the spread of Buddhism outside India, Buddhist writings of other countries like Sri Lanka and China have enriched our evidence on Buddhism. Tangible work in the sphere of excavations have revealed archaeological monuments and other historical sites which have helped in drawing a more clear and accurate picture of India's past. However, these sources also have their limitations. For the period that concerns us here (600 BC

to 186 BC) not many monuments can be found except for the Aśokan period which provides us with extensive epigraphic records.

In spite of these constraints and complexities, we can observe a persistence of tradition and social customs typical of Indian civilisation, especially of the phenomenon known as the caste system. Many renowned scholars[17] have devoted their valuable time to the study of this peculiar system. Most of them have treated the subject in its totality dealing specifically with the causes of its origin, the merits, and demerits of the system. In the sphere of social history thus there is ample scope for creative work. While the Śūdras and the Brāhmaṇas have received well deserved attention from these scholars,[18] there is a clear necessity for fresh discussion on the position of the Kṣatriyas and their relationships with other castes.

A survey of early studies points to the significant position of the Kṣatriyas in society. There is a close association between the two upper castes, the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas. In fact, Pāli literature assigned the Kṣatriyas the highest position in the caste hierarchy. While there has been a constant tug-of-war between the two upper castes for the supreme position, the Kṣatriyas have somehow been ignored by historians.

In order to gain an understanding of the functioning of power an analysis of the castes and sub-castes, their relationships, and of their guilds and councils is extremely important. Since tradition regards the Kṣatriyas as the warrior class, the supreme ruler till today, a study of the origin, position and evolution of the caste is necessary. In Indian, authority in the day-to-day functioning or for routine functions of the government did not rest on the ruler alone but the position of the ruler was taken to follow a certain pattern. A number of works deal with the duties, functions and the rules of warfare of the Kṣatriya caste. These ancient works can be grouped under the Rājadharma and Kṣatradharma treatises. A Kṣatriya in the person of the prince or the king is by itself an interesting subject of vital importance, yet not many scholars have taken up a study of these individual aspects. Renowned scholars like John Muir and E.W. Hopkins have given us some idea about the social aspect of this caste and while their works have opened avenues for further research, not many researchers have delved into this aspect. Even a superficial analysis of the total history of India reveals that there was a meteoric rise of this caste especially beginning from 600 BC. Then almost a complete disappearance from the scene around 200 BC until finally we see a crystallisation of this caste in

the emergence of the Rājpūts. All this points to the significant position that this caste held and hence becomes a fascinating subject of study. Many eminent scholars and Indologists like R.C. Majumdar, A.S. Altekar, K.P. Jayaswal, U.N. Ghoshal, N.N. Law, P.V. Kane[19] and many others from India and abroad have given us certain aspects about this caste but no comprehensive work about their position has been done. Of course Dr. Shanta Anand in her brilliant work *Kṣatriyas in Ancient India*[20] has portrayed the Kṣatriyas in the social, religious, cultural and political fields from Ṛgvedic times to AD 300. Since the period treated by Dr. Anand is vast, certain details had to be overlooked to keep the book within limits. My objective here is to corroborate the evidence provided by Dr. Anand as well as to attempt to fill the lacuna in research by providing a more intensive and detailed study of the position of the Kṣatriyas during a much shorter period, i.e., *c.* 600 BC to *c.* 186 BC.

For the convenience of studying the period that concerns us here, we have accepted Ghurye's[21] break up of the history of India into four periods. First, the Vedic period stretching to about 600 BC and comprising the literary data of the Vedas, Vedic Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇas. Second, the post-Vedic period extending to about the third century AD. This period provides us with three types of literature. The sacred laws of the Aryans present the orthodox and more or less idealistic standpoint while the epics testify to contemporary practices. Buddhist literature gives a glimpse of the institutions as they appeared to the rebels and thus in a way gives a natural picture of the practices. The third period is of the Dharmaśāstras and ends with the tenth or eleventh century AD of which Manu, Yājñavalkya, and Viṣṇu were some of the exponents. The fourth period brings us down to the nineteenth century. Though the period that concerns us here is from *c.* 600 BC to *c.* 186 BC and falls within the scope of the second period of Ghurye's classification, we cannot totally compartmentalise these epochs, as customs have evolved gradually and imperceptibly. Besides there is controversy about the dates of certain ancient works and authors. For instance, Manu and his work is placed by Dr. Ghurye after the third century AD but there is a view that his early works began from around the second century BC.[22]

The exact date of the epics also have not been determined yet. Generally it is held that they were composed over a long period of time. The positive effect of this is that the social picture of the whole

span of time is available, while the negative effect is the introduction of many contradictions and legends as they have undergone various revision efforts. However, taking into account these shortcomings, we can still obtain substantial evidence regarding different social institutions and customs.

The most trying problem in handling literary sources however, has been the lack of their chronology. Our original literary sources of information for this work include the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads, the Purāṇas, the Epics, the Sūtra and Smṛti literature, the Buddhist chronicles, Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra,* Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* and various writings and memoirs of foreign travellers. Numismatic and archaeological evidence helps in building our edifice but unfortunately there are not too many archaeological ruins of the period under study.

The Vedas give us hymns and prayers to be used in *yajñas* as well as in mundane affairs. Through them we get an idea of the social condition. For example, the Puruṣasūkta hymn[23] describes the social divisions and the justification for it. Information obtained from the Vedas has been used mainly to sketch the background and show the continuity of the institutions and customs.

The Brāhmaṇas deal with the *yajñas* a matter of vital importance to the Kṣatriyas. Kṣatriyas, especially in the person of the king, indulged in extravagent sacrifices and the Brāhmaṇas encouraged them in order to keep a psychological hold over the temporal power. The composition of the Brāhmaṇas probably began around 900 BC and continued for several centuries. They provide considerable evidence of the progress of thought from the *Ṛgveda* to the period of the Upaniṣads, when mystical elements became a very important factor in the religious life of India.[24]

There are several Brāhmaṇas, of which the most important are the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the Brāhmaṇa of hundred paths. The latter is a very lengthy text and appears to be the crowning product of the thought of the period, bringing together much that is to be found in the earlier Brāhmaṇas. It is attributed to the sage Yājñavalkya, who seems to have been a historical personage of considerable importance in the history of Hinduism. The *Śatapatha* is probably the last of the important Brāhmaṇa texts, forming part of the long series. It may have been composed in the seventh century BC but its exact date is not certain.[25]

Dating the Upaniṣads with accuracy is impossible. It is evident that

they are later than the Vedas and most of the Brāhmaṇas. If the *Ṛgveda* can be dated to 1000 or 900 BC as most scholars believe, the earliest Upaniṣads could hardly be earlier than 700-600 BC. Many Indian scholars and others, however, would date them much earlier. The last of the thirteen principal Upaniṣads, the *Maitrī Upaniṣad*, was certainly composed at a time when Buddhism was well-known and fairly widespread, no earlier than 300 BC[26] perhaps considerably later. Social institutions are the subject matter of the Sūtras[27] and the Smṛtis. Details regarding the exclusive duties of the various castes and their obligations to each other are described comprehensively. Evidence regarding important aspects such as the position of women, marriage rules, food and drink regulations are all available in these texts. For the period under study the Dharmasūtra evidence is more applicable than the later Smṛti literature, as these are short manuals on civil and religious law. The description of duties and occupations in accordance with canonical law of the various units of society, form the elementary subject matter of the Sūtra literature. In their enumeration of the king's duties we get a glimpse into the position of the Kṣatriyas. The problem with these texts, as with most of ancient literature, is that their authenticity has been marred by various recensions by later writers. The *Gautama Dharmasūtra* is considered to be the earliest followed by *Āpastamba, Baudhāyana* and *Vāsiṣṭha* Dharmasūtras.

The *"śloka* in *Vāyupurāṇa* describes the subject matter of the Purāṇas, creation, sub-creation or counter-creation, line of descendants, intervals or periods of Manus and lives of persons in lines of descendants these are the five characteristics, i.e., subjects of a Purāṇa."[28] However, not all the Purāṇas give the above mentioned matter. The later ones are full of myths and legends and include knowledge about *dharma* and *bhakti*. One has to read between the lines and glean the matter needed.

The epics are a major source of social and political commentary. The broader question of caste obligations, right behaviour and ethics of government are discussed. A detailed enumeration of the king's duties and responsibilities form a major portion of the epics.[29] The king's significance is shown by repeatedly reminding the reader that the natural order of the universe is destroyed where there is no king. It is emphasized that when Kṣatriya power declines, social order is at stake. In such emergencies, members of any caste can assume power because anarchy is dreaded.

The Rājadharma section of the Śāntiparva of the *Mahābhārata*

provides us with important details about the origin of the state and kingship.[30] A study of the duties and responsibilities of the ministers help us to gauge how independent the king was and what restraints had been placed by other members on the supreme Kṣatriyas. The discussion of taxation[31] gives a glimpse of the economic situation then. Thus peace time occupies equal inportance with the military section. The other *parvas* like the Sabhāparva, Ādiparva, Vanaparva also provide us with many insights.[32] The Sabhāparva gives an account of ideal administration and Ādiparva contains justification of a Machiavellian type of government in certain circumstances. Sabhāparva and Vanaparva contain interesting discussions on the emergency policy.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* provides us with certain administrative aspects which appear too idealistic to be factual. However, a careful analysis and selection gives a certain picture of the courts and the battlefields. The profound importance of the king is lyrically described in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Anarchy is feared because during such times the whole cosmic and social order is threatened. The *Rāmāyaṇa* is divided into different sections or *kāṇḍas,* each of which offer varied information. Interesting administrative theories are depicted in the Ayodhyākāṇḍa. The Yuddhakāṇḍa, as the name clearly implies, deals with codes of war and those of the envoys. The Laṅkākāṇḍa and the Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa provide details about fortifications, cities and physical geography.

To find an appropriate chronological niche for the two great epics of India in this time of changing events is almost impossible. For one thing, we do not know their dates, and for another, their composition covered a very long period. They contain remembrances of events that may have taken place almost a thousand years before Christ; and at the same time there is evidence of much later retouching—in the case of the *Mahābhārata* perhaps as late as the fifth century AD. The two epics being war poems, embody materials which are essential for the compilation of a military code and the preservation of a military tradition of a period which is, for a variety of reasons, anterior to that of the Mauryas, the classical authors and Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra*.[33] According to K.L. Daftari, the two epics reached their present size before the accession of Candragupta Maurya, i.e., 312 BC.[34]

Our difficulty in dating the epics can well be appreciated if we consider a few examples of the anomalies present in them. According to tradition, the great battle occurred about 3000 BC but archaeologists observe that

agriculture had barely begun in the northwest of the subcontinent. Thus if we believe that there is some historical basis for the war, a more correct date would be around the beginning of the first millennium BC. The available archaeological remains including the identification of floodscar in a trench at Hastināpura following a Purāṇic reference and the discoveries of painted grey ware in some of the sites associated with the Mahābhārata story, do not prove the existence of an urbanised culture as is evidenced in the *Mahābhārata*.[35] On the contrary, the finished story portrays that all the people of South Asia participated in the battle, along with many foreigners such as the Chinese, the Greeks, the Śakas or Scythians and the Central Asian nomads. Obviously a battle of this dimension should have left some impression on the authors of the later Vedic literature but unfortunately, we do not find any mention of it. Thus, the battle was perhaps a small affair not apparently important enough to be recorded by contemporary authors.

In the socio-religious sphere, we find Draupadī the common wife of the five brothers, a feature which apparently looks back to the very ancient times when polyandry was socially acceptable. Again the same Pāṇḍavas are seen being advised by Kṛṣṇa the king of Mathura and son of Vāsudeva and Devakī. He is the Pāṇḍava's mentor and even serves a charioteer to Arjuna in the battle. This Devakīputra appears in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* as a wise teacher of a doctrine that has some features of the doctrine of selfless action found in the *Bhagavadgītā*. This later Kṛṣṇa cannot have lived long before the composition of the Upaniṣad generally dated around 650 BC.[36]

The *Rāmāyaṇa* is somewhat different in style to the *Mahābhārata*. The orthodox tradition ascribes the date of the events described in it to 8,70,000 years ago and believes that the epic was composed soon after that date. Because of this antiquity the title *Ādi Kāvya* or primeval poem is applied to it.[37] Modern Indians realise that this early date is contrary to all the evidence of geology and prehistory. However, it is generally regarded that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is older than the *Mahābhārata* usually on the basis that Rāma is the seventh *avatāra* or incarnation of Viṣṇu while Kṛṣṇa is the eighth. Besides the *Mahābhārata* contains a brief version of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. However, A.L. Basham warns us against accepting these as conclusive proofs because he points out that the final list of ten *avatāras* is much later than either of the texts. He also makes a distinction between the main narrative of the *Mahābhārata* and its interpretations of which the *Rāmāyaṇa* is one.[38]

It is further pointed out that the *Rāmāyaṇa* reflects a more developed political life than does the *Mahābhārata*. In the latter, epic kings and chiefs are seen living in big halls where they hold great assemblies of unruly nobles, with heavy drinking, gambling and fierce quarrelling sometimes ending in bloodshed. On the contrary, the court of Daśaratha at Ayodhyā represents a much more developed institution with a full corp of ministers and officials, chancellors and palace servants, courtiers and hangers-on. This almost resembles a court of a nineteenth century Mahārājā. Stylistically also, the *Rāmāyana* is more sophisticated than the *Mahābhārata*.[39] The *Rāmāyaṇa* retains its pure form and it is said that its last additions were not made later than the second century AD.[40]

Scholars[41] consider that the *Mahābhārata* assumed its present form between 400 BC and AD 400. Sukthankar's[42] intense research in preparing the Critical Edition of the *Mahābhārata* indicates that its approximate nucleus belongs to a period between the second century BC and the second century AD and that vast additions were made by the Brāhmaṇas of the Bhṛgu family.[43]

The epics if divested of their didactic interpolations and additions appear to be essentially tales of vicissitudes, heroic deeds, treachery and loyalty. In spite of all their shortcomings, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* have captivated Indian hearts and minds as perennial sources of joy and wisdom for centuries, loved and revered by adults and children alike, enacted, told and retold endlessly, these epics embody the very essence of the Indian cultural heritage.

The Buddhist chronicles describe India from the point of view of the Kṣatriyas. Priests and nobles have always been close in spite of the undercurrent of competition between the two about each other's supremacy in the caste hierarchy. Buddhist literature gives a glimpse of the institutions as they appeared to the rebels and thus provides another picture of the practices. A combination of this view with the idealistic Śāstric view helps us in getting an unbiased opinion of the India of that peried. Important information like the prevalence of a republican form of government along with monarchical forms, the fluidity of the caste system and the position of women are depicted in detail in the Buddhist chronicles.

Buddhist and Jaina writers have also preserved valuable historical traditions of contemporary kingdoms and republics. In particular, the Jātakas, birth stories of the Buddha, have interesting information about

the king, his officials and through the animal fables provide information about contemporary social conditions. Here too the most essential problem that we face is the lack of any proper chronology. According to tradition, five hundred and fifty Jātaka stories were taken by the royal missionary Mahindra to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) during the Aśoka's reign in the middle of the third century BC. They were translated from Pāli into Sinhalese and back into Pāli by Buddhaghoṣa in the fifth century AD. It is in this translated form that the Jātakas have come down to us.[44] It is difficult to be certain about its antiquity, but recent research has brought down their dates considerably. Richard Fick assigns the Jātakas to a period prior to the Buddhistic period.[45] Professor Keith is of the view that "the *Jātaka* book is a strange conglomerate of old and new verses with new prose; some of its tales, as we know from Buddhist sculpture and a stray citation or two, go back to the Aśokan epoch or shortly after. As folklore its contents are often of undeniable age, but as Buddhist fables their antiquity is uncertain."[46] Another opinion places the bulk of the Jātaka stories about the commencement of the Christian era, though some are placed later still.[47]

A careful study of the various Jātaka stories helps us to construct the political and social history of the period. Though primarily folktales, they speak of the duties of the king, administration of justice, *varṇas* and *jātis* and economic activities.[48]

The social and political theory of the Jātakas vary quite distinctly from Brāhmaṇical theories and is altogether more liberal in its concept. The Jātakas, like the orthodox literature, assume the existence of the caste system. The institution was too powerful to be ignored or uprooted, but the exaggerated claims based on birth are not admitted.[49] It is clearly stated that the followers of pastoral, agricultural, industrial, commercial or martial pursuits cannot be called Brāhmaṇas.[50] The Jātakas observe that caste is useless for *nirvāṇa*, the ultimate goal of life. From the political point of view, especially in governmental theory, it is significant that in the Jātakas, the Kṣatriyas are always mentioned before the Brāhmaṇas. In this context, Fick maintains that in all Pāli texts the Kṣatriyas as a term is used to explain the ruling class corresponding to Vedic Rājanyas. But nowhere in the Brāhaṇical texts are the Kṣatriyas assigned a higher position than the Brāhmaṇas. Hence it is probable that the Jātakas only reflect the actual state of things in some parts of the country, probably eastern India, where Buddhism had obtained a firm hold.[51]

The Jātakas provide information about varied subjects but they have to be gleaned through a careful process of selection and elimination. Some examples are: The atmosphere in which a king was born and bred is described in the Guṭṭila Jātaka[52] as well as in the Sarabhaṅga Jātaka.[53] The Padakusalamānva Jātaka[54] gives us an idea about the king's functions. Here the king is compared to water which can be both safe and life-giving or positively destructive and harmful. Such comparisons of the king to water and other vital elements of nature illustrate how the politicial wisdom of the people sought to express itself through the medium of similes and metaphors which could be easily understood by ordinary men and women.[55] The procedure of the succession and the importance of the perpetuation of the direct line are dealt with in the Cullapaduma Jātaka[56] and Surucci Jātaka.[57] They give vivid descriptions of the election of kings as well as deposition or banishment of kings.[58] Information regarding women and marriage can be gathered from the Pabbatupathara Jātaka[59] Parantapa Jātaka,[60] Udaya Jātaka,[61] Daśaratha Jātaka[62] and others. Certain Jātakas[63] contain interesting anecdotes about the habits and idiosyncracies of the rulers thus giving us a glimpse of the social, economic and religious life of the time. Other important Buddhist sources include *Mahāvaṁsa, Dīghanikāya, Cullavagga,* and *Divyāvadāna.* The *Dīghanikāya* offers an interesting theory of the origin of kingship which is similar to the social contract theory.[64]

The Jaina and Buddhist literature also contain specific information about the Mauryan period, especially about Aśoka. Here we should consider the foreign Buddhist sources as well. Summaries of both Indian and foreign Buddhist literature containing this information can be found in the *Cambridge History of India*[65] and *Political History of Ancient India* by Hem Chandra Raychaudhuri.[66] "The records of the Buddhists and Jainas about the philosophic ideas current at the time of the Buddha and the Mahāvīra, meagre though they be [he is speaking of the incidental references to the ideas they did not accept], are of the greatest importance to the historian of that epoch."[67]

The Jaina records are unfortunately as yet known only in fragments and it is the greatest desideratum for the history of this period that they should be made accessible in full. The philosophical and religious speculations contained in them are historically important because they give evidence of a stage less cultured and more animistic and hence it is assumed that they belong to an earlier period. Incidentally, they will

definitely be found, as the portions accessible already show, and will contain a large number of important references to the ancient geographical and political divisions, as well as the social and economic conditions of India for a period of which little was known.

It is difficult to appreciate the objections made to the authenticity and authority of these documents. The arguments advanced in 1334 by Prof. Jacobi[68] seem quite incontrovertible, and indeed they have not been seriously disputed. The books purport to be substantially the ones put together in the fourth century BC when Bhadrabāhu was head of the community. The Jainas themselves, of all divisions or schools acknowledge that there had been older books, the Purvas, or the former ones, now lost. Had they been inventing the story this is not the way in which they would have put it. They would have claimed that the existing books were the original literature. The linguistic and epigraphic evidence so far available confirm in many respects both the general reliability of the tradition current among the Jainas, and the accuracy of this particular detail. Of course the name given in this tradition to the older books cannot have been the original name. They were only "former" as compared with the eleven *Aṅgas* that are still preserved. The existing books of the fourth century can only be used critically as evidence of institutions or events of the sixth century BC. Even so, we have here important materials for Indian history at present only very imperfectly used.[69]

Secular literature like the *Arthaśāstra* and Greek memoirs help to corroborate our other sources. The position of the *Arthaśāstra* in the realm of literature on politics is undisputed, as it is more a manual for administration than a theoretical work on polity. While guiding the king, Kauṭilya manages to survey the political, social and economic conditions of his time. In his study we get valuable information about the Kṣatriya in the person of the king. The *Arthaśāstra* contains detailed description of the branches of central and local administration, of military organisation, of law and justice, and interstate relations. According to Kauṭilya himself, the *Arthaśāstra* is the acquisition and preservation of dominion.[70]

As with any ancient work there is controversy among scholars about the date of the *Arthaśāstras*. Some like Shamasastri,[71] N.N.Law,[72] Jayaswal[73] hold that Kauṭilya was Chandragupta's famous minister, while scholars like Winternitz,[74] Keith,[75] and others feel it is the product of a much later period, i.e., the early centuries of the Christian era.

A list of indigenous literary sources would not be complete without mentioning Pāṇini. We have used his data as translated by V.S. Agrawala.[76] From his work we get fairly comprehensive information about social and political conditions, as he deals with caste norms, education and women in the sociological context. He also throws light on the significance of contemporary political institutions, especially about republics, administrative, legal and military terms which help in realising the extent of Kṣatriya power.

While considering the highly valuable foreign evidence, we are faced with the limited extent of this source. The history of Herodotus and inscriptions of Cyrus and Darius give us authentic information about the administrative set-up. Alexander's invasion was a turning point in Indian history, especially for the meteoric rise of Kṣatriya power. The monarchical form of government came to be accepted as the "best" form. The condition of India on the eve of Alexander's invasion were faithfully recorded by Alexander's companions and these testimonies were preserved by later writers such as Arrian and Strabo. After Alexander left one of his "viceroys" in western India, Seleucus Nicator, sent Megasthenes to Chandragupta Maurya's court. *Indika* the book written by him is unfortunately lost. Only quotations from it remain as a first hand account of the court of Pāṭaliputra and the system of administration. Fragments from Megasthenes' book give us testimonies about social and economic practices as well. He discusses the caste system, food habits, general social behaviour, the tax system and the economic condition of people. Here we have mainly relied upon McCrindle's work.[77]

In spite of the valuable information provided by the Greek writers one has to use them jndiciously because often the novel, unrealistic exaggerated fragments have been quoted, such as the description of Chandragupta Maurya's army, which according to Megasthenes, comprised 600,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 9,000 elephants and a large number of chariots.[78]

Archaeology as a science aims at curbing the tendency of fabricating history by culling material from myths, lores and legends. An archaeologist's task is to unveil truth and not to romanticise the cavalcade of history and quantify abstractions. Archaeological excavations of ancient Indian sites were undertaken systematically only after Lord Curzon organised it in 1902. For the period under study not much archaeological evidence is available because wood was used as building

material and with the passage of time, much of it has decayed. Some examples of pre-Mauryan sites which have been excavated are Takṣaśilā and Kauśāmbī. These excavations have revealed remains of fortifications showing the military organisation of the people, an important aspect of the Kṣatriya spirit of warfare. The houses reveal the economic condition of the people and the layout of the town helps us to understand the social and political set-up. The difference in building materials as well as the plan or layout of the houses give an indication of the proximity between the castes of whether the Kṣatriyas, in the person of the king really followed the rules, and whether he looked after the common people. These are some details which can be gathered from the excavations. An interesting archaeological find is the cave drawing of a discus-throwing charioteer in a Mirzapur Cave belonging to *c.* 800 BC[79] probably referring to the war-like Kṣatriyas.

However, for the Mauryan period the story is somewhat different, as here the greatest importance is that of the Aśokan edicts. These epigraphic records give an authentic account about the history of that era as the entire political and social history is depicted in the context of Aśoka's exposition and propaganda of *his dhamma* (The Law of Piety). Remains of towns and buildings of this period excavated at various sites like Patna, Rajgir and Nalanda provide illustrative information.

Coming to numismatic evidence, the early coins fall into the category of single and bent bar silver pieces, punch-marked and cast silver and copper coins. These usually bear some kind of symbol or mark. Judging by the coins it appears regular coinage had come into use before the end of the seventh century BC. The main examples being the silver punch-marks on the coins of Pasenadi, the emperor of Kosala a contemporary of the Buddha and probably of Ajātaśatru of the Magadhan dynasty.[80] A large quantity of silver and copper punch-marked coins and silver bar coins appear to have been in circulation throughout the Mauryan period.[81] That these coins are the earliest surviving coinage in India and that the symbols were official marks can now be stated with a fair degree of certainty.[82] This form of evidence helps to reconstruct the economic situation of the age, which in turn helps to hint at the political stability during the phase when the Kṣatriyas were at the helm of affairs.

This brief survey of the sources is sufficient to indicate the difficulties and hurdles one has to face while trying to draw conclusions about ancient India. After all the hard work, one still cannot confirm those conclusions.

In the present monograph I have made an attempt to present a systematic and comprehensive picture of the position of Kṣatriyas in the politicial, social, religious, and economic spheres.

The work has been divided into eight chapters. The first chapter, relating to the introductions, a justification of the selection of this topic along with the subject matter and the sources consulted for obtaining evidence.

The second chapter gives an account of the origin of the Kṣatriyas and an idea of the concept of Kṣatra. Here the origin of the caste system has been traced to illustrate the birth of the ruling caste. The concept of Kṣatra provides a brief idea of the etymological origin of the term "Kṣatriya."

The work then moves on to the third chapter which focusses on the political aspect. Under this, the Kṣatriya has been treated as the king and as the prince. A study is provided regarding the origin of kingship and the laws and customs pertaining to the eligibility for this position. An idea about the controversies regarding the royal succession is also given. An exhaustive narration about duties and responsibilities, especially of the king, is the other sub-division. To substantiate the idea that the king was not always an autocratic despot, a study of the major constraints on the king's power in the functioning of the *sabhā* and the *samiti* and their interdependence, is made. This chapter ends with the concept of revolution, in which the role of the people and their participation are highlighted.

The social aspect forms the basis for chapter four, with the general social framework serving as the background of this chapter. The position of the ruling class is seen in their mutual relation with the other castes. I have also tried to gauge how far they deviated from the normative functions tradition ascribed to the Kṣatriyas. Finally the Kṣatriyas lifestyle is portrayed in the food and drink regulations, the costumes and jewellery that they wore, the amusements and recreation that they took part in.

In continuation of this aspect, I have concentrated on depicting the Kṣatriya woman, which forms the subject matter of chapter five. Her position in the society of that time is the main subject matter. Since the Kṣatriyas reached the zenith of temporal power in the person of the king, the women in the role of the queen must have played an equally important part, which is why the role of the queen has been treated separately. Romantic and tragic stories, as well as the intrigues of the harem, give us an insight into

the real life of the so-called queens. Courtesans, though outside the pale of wedlock and thought to be partners only in enjoyment, often influenced policy matters and held a special position in society. Thus the harem and the courtesans form a part of this assessment.

A study of the economy of the period, the subject matter of chapter six, further illuminates the position of this caste. The principle of taxation gives us the story of the common man's condition, hence a glimpse into the distribution of wealth among the various castes. An assessment of the resources of the state and their expenditure provides an insight into the rule of the king and the condition of the common man. We get an idea about the benevolence of the king and the plight of the people. The guild system throws light upon the system of specialisation that developed in that period. A study of the gift system indicates the mutual relation between the different castes. This system probably played a role in the downfall of the Kṣatriyas because those gifted with land often became independent in their region. The revenue thus collected sometimes incited the beneficiaries to revolt. In fact from 200 BC onwards, we find the Brāhmaṇas or the Vaiśyas at the helm of the political scene. This must have been possible mainly because of their economic strength.

The seventh chapter relates to the religious scene. In dealing with this aspect first an idea about the Brāhmaṇical religion with its rites and *yajñas* is provided. The main sects that developed as a reaction to this orthodoxy culminated in the religious movements of Buddhism and Jainism. The masterminds behind these movements belonged to the Kṣatriya caste. A study of the rise of these two religions highlights the significant position held by the Kṣatriyas. As the kings, Kṣatriyas supported and were the royal patrons of certain religions. A survey of this aspect helps us to realise the importance of this caste in the socio-religious sphere. The royal patronage granted to the new religions, espacially Aśoka's patronage of Buddhism, laid the foundation on which was built the impressive edifice of one of the world's most widespread religions. This chapter also provides detailed information about the sacrifices that a royal Kṣatriya had to participate in. Of special interest are the sacrifices connected with the consecration ceremony.

The eighth and the final chapter deals with the conclusion of the entire monograph.

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bāhu rājanyaḥ hṛtaḥ /
Uru tad asya yad Vaiśyaḥ
Padbhyam Śūdru ajayata //
—*Ṛgveda,* X.9012
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62. Daśaratha Jātaka, no. 461.
63. Assaka Jātaka, no. 207; Ruru Jātaka, no. 482; Bharu Jātaka, no. 213.
64. *Dīghanikāya,* III.90-93.
65. *The Cambridge History of India,* vol. I, *Ancient India,* ed. E.J. Rapson, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 470-71, 500.
66. Hem Chandra Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India,* from the Accession of Parikshit to the Extinction of the Gupta Dynasty, fifth ed., Calcutta, 1950, pp. 264, 294, 302.
67. Hermann Jacobi, *Jain Sutras*, 2.XXVII.
68. Ibid., 1.XXXVII-XIV.
69. Rhys Davids, op. cit., pp. 164-65.
70. *Arthaśāstra,* XV.1.
71. Shamasastri, *Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra,* introduction.
72. N.N. Law, *Calcutta Review,* 1924.
73. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* Appendix.
74. M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der Indischen Literature,* vol. III, pp. 519 ff.
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76. V.S. Agrawala, *India as Known to Pāṇini,* Lucknow,1953.
77. J.W. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian,* Calcutta, 1960.
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80. Ibid., ill. 2.
81. P.L. Gupta, *A Bibliography of the Hoards of Punch-marked Coins in Ancient India,* Bombay, 1955.
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CHAPTER 2

Origin of the Kṣatriya Caste

TO OFFER an overview of the various aspects of the Kṣatriyas, one has to first understand the "birth" of this caste. Indian society has been, and even today is, an amalgam of different elements of great diversity, of different creeds, different customs and even different colours. Indian society, therefore, has an essence of its own and it is probably the caste system which has lent stability to this complex multiple society. Perhaps this system was an organic response to the needs of the time. As J.H. Hutton rightly points out, caste has proved capable of absorbing any intrusive society and no intruders have yet succeeded in revolutionising it though it is not so rigid that a caste cannot move upwards or downwards in the social scale.[1]

Owing to the ubiquity and strangeness of this institution of the caste system many able scholars have proposed various theories for the origin of the system. Here I do not propose to go into the controversies about the origin of the system, but to merely give a summary of the generally accepted theory.

The most important factor in the development of the system was the racial struggle between the fair-skinned Aryans and the dark-skinned non-Aryans. The division of labour created the occupational classes. The tribal differences among the non-Aryans helped in its formation. The inherent instincts of man to claim superiority from others, to keep the secrets of their trade and other habits, to maintain this claim; to avoid risks by following the same occupation and distinguishing oneself, by following special rules of commensality and connubium, further divided the people into segments. The loosely organised clans and tribes naturally could not exert any power to crush the differences and enforce uniform laws. In no other society did religion hold such a dominant position in the conduct of

public affairs and human behaviour. Religion formed the very basis of the Indian social structure. The cosmopolitan nature of the Indian religion had failed to draw a line between what was Indian and what was foreign. It was concerned more with the preservation of the social order than with the development of a uniform creed.[2] With the growth of the belief in the law of *karma*, there was an unquestioned resignation of an individual to his particular avocation which further aided the caste system. The abnormal growth of the Brāhmaṇical rituals, especially rules concerning ceremonials,class relationships, Brāhmaṇa immunities, caste commitments and the like[3] outweighed any reasonable attempts to bring uniformity. Society came to be divided both horizontally and vertically into watertight compartments between the classes of Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra.

The *Ṛgveda* gives us the celebrated Puruṣasūkta hymn[4] where the four orders of society are mentioned for the first time.

> According to this, different beings arose from the different limbs of the body of the primeval man offered in sacrifice. The Brāhmaṇa was his Puruṣa's mouth, the Rājanya made his arms, the being (called) the Vaiśya, he was his thighs, the Śūdra sprang from his feet.

The three classes Brahma, Kṣatra and Vaiśya are frequently mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*.[5] According to some scholars, not just the Puruṣasūkta hymn but other hymns also indicate the fourfold division of society—"One to high sway (i.e., Brāhmaṇa), one to exalted glory (i.e., Kṣatriya), one to pursue his gain (i.e., Vaiśya) and one his labour (i.e., Śūdra) all to regard their different vocations all moving creatures hath the Dawn awakened.[6] Scholars have even traced the origin of the caste system to pre-Vedic times when the Indian and Iranian branches of the Aryan race had not separated. Early Iranian society consisted of four classes, viz., Atharva Rathaestha, Vastriya, Fshouyant, and Huiti probably comparable to the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra of Indian society.[7]

Going further back in time, we can trace the seeds of separation even in the Indus Valley civilisation, although it was not the strict caste based segmentation that we are familiar with. Here we meet the beginning of social isolation based on a trade oriented urban standardisation. In any trade supported city centre, there is always an elite way of life in the upper strata and a rural or less consumer based sector in a sub-standard urban condition, in the community. It is consumerism that separates the upper class from the lower bestowing the leadership for

organisation in the hands of the higher rank. In this structure they also tend thereby to control the masses.[8]

All those not engaged in food production must have been supported by the surplus accumulated in the temple or royal granaries. Thus this entire group was dependent for the major part of their subsistence upon the temple or the court. Like in any other society, the priests, civil and military leaders and officials of this society absorbed a major share of the concentrated surplus and thus formed the "ruling class."[9] This class as an Egyptian scribe actually put it must have been "exempt from all manual tasks."[10] On the other hand, the "lower class" besides being guaranteed peace and security were relieved from intellectual tasks.

However, the ruling class must have conferred substantial benefits in the form of planning and organisation. Therefore the specialist craftsmen were provided with raw materials needed to employ their skill. This kind of specialisation might have led to the growth of craft heredity thus leading to the formation of separate craft groups. Crafts got further encouragement from the security guaranteed in a state organisation based on residence rather than kinship.

Yet in return for security they became dependent on the temple or court and were relegated to the lower classes. The lot of the peasant masses must have been worse in matters of material advantage.

In spite of this, peasants, craftsmen, priests and rulers were held together not only by reason of identity of language and belief, but also because each performed mutually complimentary functions needed for the well-being of the whole.[11] The secular character without any institutionalised or well organised religion was disturbed by the growth of religious groups. By the middle of the second millennium BC the secular, urban, consumer-oriented, agricultural exploiting economy was destroyed and there arose new masters in the form of a new religious and intellectual elite.[12]

A consideration of the nature of buildings within the citadels also point to a growing distribution of population according to social standing as they housed the residences of the God, of the priest and the king. The presence of the granaries probably point to the taxes paid by the cultivators to the government, whether priestly, princely or aristocratic. They may also represent well protected government headquarters either central or provincial. This protection was necessitated probably because the local population might vent its wrath and displeasure on the rulers and

their treasury during a crisis. They could also be attacked by destitutes during a famine.[13]

Thus from all this evidence it becomes clear that the concept of the ruler and the ruled was slowly taking root in the Indian scene.

Later texts like the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* also provide a similar interpretation of the origin of the caste system as the Puruṣasūkta hymn: "The Brāhmaṇa is the chief, for he is created from the mouth (*mukha*) the Kṣatriya is vigorous for he is created from vigour, the Vaiśya is meant to be 'consumed' as he is created from the stomach and the Śūdra is to be the transporter of others because he is created from the feet."[14] Here "consumed" is probably used in the context of being taxed, for Vaiśyas were the common people mainly agriculturists. They were in fact the moneyed class because they were employed in profitable business like trade, cultivation and business. Unless they were stripped of their monetary strength, they were liable to gain power on their financial or economic strength, hence they must be "consumed" to maintain the superiority of the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya both of whom were not employed in any regular gainful employment. Śūdras as the transporter probably indicate their status as the ones who were to carry the burden of others or toil for them. They represented the menial class. Since both the lower classes were in some way or other oppressed by the upper two they were closer to each other just as the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas realised that they had to coexist to maintain their superior hold upon the society.

With the passage of time and the expansion of the Aryans further into the country, especially eastwards new laws and new tendencies came into focus. The caste laws began to become more stringent. The Brāhmaṇas now began to monopolise the religious sphere. Their whole energy was devoted to the "varied handlings of the hymns and the elaboration of the rites and ceremonies."[15] Slowly they were shutting out all the other castes from their profession by jealously and zealously guarding their special knowledge and making the rites more complicated and artificial.

Like any other primitive people of the world, the Aryans also followed restrictions regarding connubium and comensality. In India such customs were prevalent among the different tribes such as the Aryans, Draviḍians, Kolarians and many more. The more the Aryans came into contact with the natives the more conscious they became about their restrictions and the purity of their blood. The question of purity of blood, which at first concerned the relationship between the conquerors and the conquered, began to poison the whole structure of society.[16]

Besides the four castes mentioned above, mention must be made of the low tribes and low trades. They probably belonged to the aborigines who had been pushed by the native Draviḍian conquerors into the interior of the country. The Aryans naturally found them more uncouth and loathsome than the "dark-skinned Dasyus." This probably gave birth to the fifth caste or the untouchables.

The ruling class in the course of their conquest acquired many slaves and serfs who were both Aryans and Draviḍians. This automatically aided the proud victor to withdraw from all manual work and brought the Aryans and the Draviḍians into closer contact. This intermingling led to the degradation of the Aryans among the Aryans, thus dividing society further. The aristocrats now began to live a licentious life. The increase in polygamy and intermarriage between the Aryans themselves and the Aryans and the natives naturally gave birth to another caste whom the law-givers quickly assigned the position of mixed castes.

These insensible divisions within the variable and undefined borders of each caste and class now made the lawgivers prescribe special rules for the guidance of different castes to conform to special habits and etiquette.

Traces of these ideas can be seen in ancient texts like the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* where the three upper *varṇas* are associated with three worlds. According to it, Prajāpati generated the Brāhmaṇas by saying *bhūḥ*. In saying *bhuvaḥ* he created the Kṣatriya and generated the Vaiśyas by saying *svaḥ*.[17]

The same work provides us with another interesting interpretation. It says: "milk is nobility (Kṣatra) and *surā* or liquor the peasantry (*viś*). The milk He purifies after purifying the *surā,* He thus produces the nobility out of the peasantry, for nobility is produced out of the peasantry."[18]

The same treatise also associates the three *varṇas* with three most popular Vedic metres.[19] Similar references can be found in the sacred *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, where we find the Brāhmaṇa is associated with the Gāyatrī metre for it confers brilliance and splendour, the Kṣatriya with the Triṣṭubh as it confers force, power and strength and the Vaiśya with the Jagati as it confers cattle.[20]

Similar differentiation is found in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* as well where the three castes are associated with three Vedas: The Brāhmaṇa with the *Sāmaveda,* the Kṣatriya with the *Yajurveda,* and the Vaiśya with the *Ṛgveda*.[21]

These distinctions were further emphasized as the spiritual power entrenched itself and the temporal power swelled itself. During this process a further blending took place between the Aryans and the Dravidians which obliterated racial and cultural differences. Now the only distinction really visible were the caste distinctions. This is reflected in the *Gautama Dharmasūtra*[22] where Yavanas are said to be born of Kṣatriya fathers and Śūdra mothers. Birth had become the sole determinant of one's caste.[23]

However, this process of determination by birth had also undergone many stages of modification. According to the *Mahābhārata,* three wives were allowed to a Brāhmaṇa, i.e., one Brāhmaṇa, one Kṣatriya and one Vaiśya wife. The Kṣatriya could marry twice, one from his own caste and one from the Vaiśya *varṇa*. The Vaiśya however, was allowed only one wife, i.e., from his own *varṇa*.[24] In this situation the children of such women were granted the same status in the caste hierarchy as the father.

The *Mahābhārata*[25] also alludes to an earlier situation were the child is equal in caste to the man who owns him and nourishes him. Examples of such sons were the Kṛtrima owned by his accepting father, the Kṣetraj owned by the husband as he is the owner of his mother, the Kānīna owned by his grandfather as he is the owner of his daughter. The Adhyūdha, i.e., the Sahod son was also owned by the husband as he is the owner of the mother. Here the owner is quite different from the procreator giving a glimpse of the traces of promiscuity in ancient India. Subsequently with the growth of the strict sense of chastity of women and changes in the institution of marriage the procreator and the owner became one and the same. This probably led to the declaration that the offspring will be identical in *varṇa* to the procreator.[26] This derivation of caste is known as Pitṛsāvarṇa, or same *varṇa* as the father. This lax condition of women's conjugal fidelity[27] underwent a complete modification when stringent marriage laws were promulgated. Now the *varṇa* of the offspring depended both upon the father (procreator) and the mother.[28]

This phase saw the growth of the mixed castes (mentioned earlier) who, according to Dr. Daftari, actually got the *varṇa* of their mother but were given new names.[29] He further adds that in both these cases *pratiloma* marriage, i.e., marriage with a woman of a higher *varṇa* was forbidden. Offspring of such conjugal relations were regarded as unlawful, outcaste or Śūdra of the bad type.[30] However, it may be doubted whether this prohibition of *pratiloma* marriage really portrayed the actual social

condition, because the three higher *varṇas* were very much like each other, belonging to the same Aryan stock, performing *yajñas*, studying the Vedas and also intimately connected with each other by *anuloma* marriages. This theory of *pratiloma* marriages may have been invented to explain the origin of existing different tribes and races whose habits were obnoxious to the higher *varṇas*. Some *pratiloma varṇas* like the Suta, Magadha and Vaidehaka may have been born out of actual *pratiloma* marriages but the horde of other such *varṇas* mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*[31] and other texts probably relate to other races and tribes.[32]

As the feeling of superiority entrenched itself, each caste became conscious of their social position. Laws of commensality and connubium became more rigid. Now even *anuloma* marriages, i.e., marrying a woman of the lower *varṇa* was prohibited. The practical difficulty of educating sons for duties of a *varṇa* different from the father manifested itself and prevented marriages with women of different *varṇa*.[33]

This lack of intercourse between the different *varṇas* naturally led to secretiveness and internal jealousies. Each caste wanted to keep their trade secrets so the privileges pertaining to each caste because of their knowledge would not have to be shared with many. Thus finally a stage came when birth (both from the father's and mother's sides) became the sole determinant of one's caste and each caste was granted special duties and privileges by the lawgivers.

The lawful occupations of a Brāhmaṇa were studying, teaching, sacrificing for himself, officiating as priest for others, giving alms and receiving alms. The Kṣatriyas were to study but not teach, sacrificing for himself but not officiating as priest for others, giving but not receiving alms, governing and fighting. The Vaiśyas could study, sacrifice for himself, give alms, cultivate, breed cattle, trade and lend money with interest. The Śūdras were to subsist by serving the higher caste and if needed by practising mechanical arts.[34]

Thus we see that the caste system originated not from one cause but was the product of the whole social system. Ironically it was this caste system which really kept the ancient Indians united and prevented them from falling into a state of barbarism. Any innovation, religious or political, was sure to cause an upheaval in the social condition but in India the caste system was the restraining hand. Each caste being aware of its duties and obligations to other castes did not take to devouring each other. Any trauma was safely absorbed by this system. The shame which

would be cast upon the whole caste if one of its individuals went unpunished and rebelled guaranteed the execution of duties by the entire caste in order to guard its honour, thus ensuring a healthy growth. Unfortunately, with the passage of time, the rationale underlying the whole system has been forgotten and a chosen few have wrongly used the system to exploit others.

This in a nutshell gives the origin of the caste system. Dividing people into castes existed also among Egyptians, Arabs and Tartars, and it may be said that most of the ancient peoples followed some kind of caste division. Cecrops separated the people of Athens into four tribes or classes while their lawgiver Solon upheld this distinction and strengthened it in several ways. Numa Pompilius also devised a system of dividing people into different castes and classes to put an end to the social hatred between the Sabines and Romans.[35]

Having noted the origin of the caste system, let us in brief review the theories about the origin of the Kṣatriyas alone.

All the theories are unanimous about the divine origin of this caste. The earliest reference to the caste system, the Puruṣasūkta hymn, refers to Rājanya and not Kṣatriya but it has now come to be accepted by most scholars that both Rājanya and Kṣatriyas are the same. Here the origin is related to the divine primeval man offered in a sacrifice.

The *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* compares the Kṣatriya with Indra, i.e., Rājanya had the character of Indra.[36] As already noted, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* relates the *varṇas* to the three worlds or the three Vedic metres, all divine and religious in nature. In the *Atharvaveda*[37] we find a comment that when the *vrātya* (servant) became impassioned (*rājasa*) the Rājanya *varṇa* was born. The divine nature is further exemplified in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* where Brahmā is said to have created the spiritual power, Brahmā and the lordly power, Kṣatra.[38] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* in a rite identifies the Kṣatriya (Kṣatra) with Varuṇa thus placing him in a superior position than the people![39] The same treatise further reiterates Mitra Varuṇa as the "Counsel and the power." Mitra, the sacerdotium (Brahma) is the counsel, and Varuṇa, the regnum (Kṣatra), the power.[40] This identification of the Kṣatra with the gods can be traced in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*[41] as well: translated it reads somewhat like this: Brahmā being alone could not develop therefore he created a better form, Kṣatra or Kṣatriya along with the gods Indra, Varuṇa, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, and Mṛtyu—all these represent the Kṣatriya *varṇa*.

The later Sūtra literature embody the same idea as the Puruṣasūkta hymn. According to them, "The Brāhmaṇa was his mouth, the Kṣatriya formed his arms, the Vaiśya his thighs, the Śūdra was born from his feet."[42] Again the divine origin is emphasized by a repetition of almost all the Vedic concepts, e.g., the same treatise reiterates the origin of *varṇas* from different metres.[43] The Brāhmaṇa with Gāyatrī, the Kṣatriya with Triṣṭubh, the Vaiśya with Jagati and the Śūdra without any metre.

The Purāṇas while dealing with the importance of *varṇas* in the rise of the state provide us a similar kind of divine sanction for Kṣatriya power. It is stated that when the means of subsistence was provided, society came to be divided into four *varṇas* with their respective avocations. The Brāhmaṇas were meant for praying, the Kṣatriyas for fighting, the Vaiśyas for producing and the Śūdras for manual labour.[44]

In spite of this settlement the people did not fulfil their fixed duties perhaps because the division favoured the upper two castes which was resented by the conscious producers and "physical" labourers. In this situation of mutual conflict "having become aware of this fact the Lord Brahmā prescribed *daṇḍa*, Criminal justice and war as the profession of the Kṣatriyas."[45]

Thus to sanctify the *varṇa* system the Brāhmaṇical texts are saturated with fascinating concepts favouring the divine origin and sanction of it. While seeking verification for the existence of the caste system when we turn to other sources, all corroborate it, though they may differ regarding the origin of the system.

First if we take the Buddhist texts there seems to be an apparent unorthodoxy in thought. An apparent acceptance of the idea stressed in *Majjhimanikāya* seems to be steadily growing:

> None is by birth a Brāhmaṇa, none is by birth no Brāhmaṇa. By deeds is one a Brāhmaṇa or no Brāhmaṇa. By deeds one is a farmer and by deeds an artisan, a trader too, by deeds one is a servant and a thief, by deeds a soldier and a celebrant and even so a king is by deeds.[46]

In the Uddālaka Jātaka we find similar sentiments when it is preached,

> Khattiya, Brāhmaṇa, Vessa, Sudda, Chandala, and Pukasa can all be virtuous and self-restrained and attain *nirvāṇa* among them, when they have attained peace of the soul there is no one who is better and no one who is worse.[47]

Ironically these teachings and the great vehemence with which Gautama Buddha preached against caste distinctions, preclude ther deep rooted

nature of this system. In fact there is an attempt in all Buddhist literature to prove the superiority of the Kṣatriya caste. Everywhere the Kṣatriyas are mentioned before the Brāhmaṇas in the caste hierarchy. "Even when the Khattiya has fallen into the lowest depths, he is still the best and the Brāhmaṇas are low." "The Khattiya is considered the highest by men who attach value to family."[48] The Kṣatriya pride in the purity of birth is well expressed in the frequently repeated phrase, *mātā pituṣu khattiya*, i.e., "a Kṣatriya born of both Kṣatriya father and mother." In the *Dīgha-nikāya* we find that the Kṣatriyas would not accept the son of a Kṣatriya by a Brāhmaṇa wife as true Kṣatriya.[49]

N.G. Wagle has vividly portrayed the ongoing transformation of the Aryan tribal society into a *jāti* society even during Buddha's time.[50] The Buddhist text recognises the wisdom of confining castes to their crafts. A canonical passage mentions assignment of begging for alms to the Brāhmaṇa, bow and arrow to Kṣatriya, tillage and dairy farming to the Vaiśyas.[51] Thus it becomes clear that in spite of the illusion of unorthodox social system, caste in perpetuating the archaic institutions, had virtually frozen the social system.

We even have epigraphic evidence confirming the existence of the four social classes, viz., Aśoka's officers are appointed to work among the warriors (*bhaṭamayeṣu*),[52] Brāhmaṇas and the Ibhyas, i.e., Vaiśyas. It seems that Dasabhaṭaka in Aśokan inscriptions[53] stands for the Śūdras.[54]

Thus these evidences contradict the view of Rhys Davids who tries to express the view that the majority of the people at least during the fourth and third centuries BC were Buddhists.[55]

Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya, also testifies to the existence of the caste system. Of course the division of people he alludes to is different from the fourfold division we are familiar with but the "soul" of the matter is the same, i.e., society was divided into various groups mainly according to the profession each group followed. According to him, the population of India was divided into seven [parts] castes: the philosophers were first in rank; the second caste consisted of the husbandmen, the third caste consisted of herdsmen and hunters; the fourth class consisted of those who worked at trades, of those who were vendors, of those who were employed in bodily labour; the fifth class consisted of warriors or fighting men; the sixth class consisted of the overseers and the seventh class consisted of councillors and assessors.[56]

Here probably the fifth class relates to the Kṣatriya class we are dealing with. They are described as "fighting men, who, when not engaged in active service, passed their time in idleness and drinking. They are maintained at the King's expense and hence they were always ready, when occasion calls to take the field, for they carry nothing of their own with them but their bodies."[57]

In the Buddhist text probably the best description of the concept of the origin of the Kṣatriya caste can be found in the graphic description of the social contract theory of the origin of kingship in the *Dīghanikāya* (Aggañña Suttanta).[58] "In the golden age men were made of mind, fed on rapture and travelled through the air. After a while, the earth seperated from water and men worked the earth into lumps of food and relished its flavour, slowly, the self-luminescence of men disappeared the sun and the moon came into existence, seasons, night and day and other forms of time manifest itself. Evil and immorality grew. Plants came to earth. Gradually conditions became less idyllic there arose cheating, lying, censure and punishment. Thus the people decided to choose someone who would punish wrong doers and in return receive a portion of the rice. The people selected the most handsome and capable among them who fulfilled his task and was given a portion of the rice. This man was the *mahā sammata,* the great chosen one[59] then arose the expression *khattiya* or Lord of the field. The "noble" was the protector of the field. At first an individual was responsible for protecting the field of another for which he was given some share in the field. Slowly a class of protectors emerged who were designated as the Khattiya Maṇḍala. They had a contract with the people to protect their fields. Thus arose the social circles of Khattiya Maṇḍala.[60] The Buddhist texts observe that those who settled on the outskirts of villages and took to writing books, came to be known as Brāhmaṇas. Others occupied themselves with various trades and agriculture. They married, raised families and ultimately formed the common people of the nation. The trades came to be known as *vissa,* thus *vissa* became the term denoting the trading class. Still others who lived by hunting and other menial and trivial professions came to be designated as Sudda. Thus the caste system was born because the origin of all these classes were according to the norm.[61]

Kauṭilya too in his *Arthaśāstra*[62] refers to the prevalence of the caste system. He observes the law laid down in this Vedic lore is beneficial, as it prescribes the respective duties of the four *varṇas* and the four stages of life. The special duties of the Brāhmaṇa are studying, teaching, performing

sacrifices for self, officiating at other people's sacrifices, making gifts and receiving gifts.

Those of the Kṣatriyas are studying, performing sacrifice for self, making gifts, living by (the profession of) arms and protecting other beings.

Those of the Vaiśyas are studying, performing sacrifices for the self, making gifts, agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade.

Those of the Śūdras are service of the twice born, engaging in an economic calling, viz., agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade and taking of the profession of the artisan and the actor.

Thus we see that the caste system was a living phenomenon since time immemorial. No source has denied its existence, they have only disagreed on the theory of the origin of the various castes. While the Brāhmaṇical texts have tried to give them a divine origin, Buddhist sources have attributed a human contractual theory to them. U.N. Ghoshal also tends to agree to the "human origin" of the Kṣatriyas. He too says that when lust, greed and passion were at their nadir people decided to select a capable person who could punish the wrong doer and in return promised to give him a portion of the paddy. This man came to be known as Khattiya and this was the beginning of the origin of the Khattiya class.[63]

Thus we now see that the Kṣatriyas were a powerful element in the social structure and so their contribution in fashioning social history cannot be exaggerated.

Kṣatra and Kṣatriya

From the Vedic rather Indus noblity to the epic military caste, there is an obvious change in the social structure with the predominance of the Kṣatriya caste, when we find at the pinnacle of the political system. They emerge as the fighting class with the primary duty of providing protection both to the people and the motherland (*prajānām rakṣānām*).

> The evidence of the Jātakas points to the word 'Khattiya' denoting the members of the old Aryan nobility who had led the tribes to conquest as well as those families of the aborigines who had managed to maintain their princely status.[64]
>
> In the Epic (*JAOS*, 13.73 et seq.) the term 'Kṣatriya' seems to include all those persons but probably it has a wider signification of the Khattiyas, and would cover all the royal military vassals and feudal chiefs, expressing in fact, pretty much the same as the barons of early English history.[65]

This growth naturally was not the result of happenings over a short span of time but was the product of an amalgamation of factors and circumstances over a long period of time.

We can trace the word *kṣatriya* to Ṛgvedic times. Here the term is generally used to denote dominion, supremacy, power and might, as originally the term may have been used to describe the powers of gods like Agni, Varuṇa, Mitra and others.[66]

In the most familiar concept of the fight of the gods with the demons we find the gods relinquishing their power in favour of Indra.[67] Indra is thus endowed with dominion or *kṣatra* to slay Vṛtra.[68] In another passage, Indra increases this *kṣatra* or might.[69] Indra is praised for his mighty power *kṣatra* over the people.[70] This power of Indra has also been considered matchless.[71] Several other passages mention and eulogise Indra's dominion.[72] Thus we find that here *kṣatra* is used mainly to denote matchless physical strength.

The gods Mitra and Varuṇa also acquired this *kṣatram* which is beyond defeat.[73] The same gods are responsible for upholding the *kṣatra* which rests on a thousand pillars.[74] *kṣatra* in the sense of power or sway is evident when both these gods are praised for their high sway.[75] God Agni's might and strength or *kṣatra* is also lauded.[76] There are certain hymns where the concept *sukṣatrasa* or *sukṣatra*[77] appear, but here too probably, *kṣatra* as might and dominion is represented. The preposition *su* only indicates good or fair.

Besides these famous early Vedic deities, other gods are also mentioned as possessing *kṣatra* or dominion and might,[78] e.g., the son of Trasadasyu Trikṣi was raised by the Aśvins to high sway, dominion or Kṣatra.

All these examples go a long way to prove that *kṣatra* at the beginning was representative of might and dominion. Later hymns in the *Ṛgveda* indicate Kṣatra as a leader.[79] Probably the seeds of the most familiar concept of Kṣatra as representing princely power can be discerned in the late hymn where Indra is requested to support the princely power of Rathaproṣṭhasa.[80]

Though a beginning of a fourfold division in society was already noticeable during the Ṛgvedic age,[81] nowhere in the *Ṛgveda* is the term *kṣatra* used to represent the Kṣatriya *varṇa*. Later Vedic literature offers significant indication of *kṣatra* representing besides might and dominion, the Kṣatriya *varṇa*. By the time of the *Atharvaveda* we find the term

kṣatra representing both dominion and the Kṣatriya *varṇa*. *Kṣatra* representing dominion can be traced in a number of hymns.[82] However reference to the Kṣatriya *varṇa* is still limited to a few hymns.[83] The word *kṣatra* in hymn 11.15.4 had been translated by both Sāyaṇa the commentator, and Whitney,[84] as representing the Kṣatriya caste. This trend of Kṣatra denoting the Kṣatriya caste gained a stronger foothold as time elapsed. With the later Saṁhitās[85] and Brāhmaṇa[86] literature it became the accepted norm. The Brāhmaṇas mention the four castes. In fact, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* clearly lays down that there are four castes, Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra.[87]

Here we find that instead of Kṣatriya the term, "Rājanya" is used to represent the second caste in the hierarchy. This brings us to another interesting aspect of the term *kṣatra* which might help us to understand its importance even better. We find that there are certain specific words in association to which the term *kṣatra* is often used. The term "Rājanya" as a synonym of Kṣatriya is also found in the *Ṛgveda*.[88] The mention of the term in *Atharvaveda*[89] is interpreted by Sāyaṇa as *rājñobhisiktasya putraḥ* or the son of an anointed king. However, the term is more frequently seen in later Vedic literature, especially the Brāhmaṇas.[90] In fact, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* ordains that *rājanaya* stands for might and *kṣatriya* denotes strength[91] thus identifying both the terms.

The other words that we commonly find associated with *kṣatra* are, *varcas*,[92] *bala*,[93] *ojas*,[94] *prajāpati*,[95] *rāṣṭra*,[96] and *kṣatriya*.[97] Certain ancient literary books mention *kṣatra* along with *bala* and *ojas*.[98] While connecting *kṣatra* and Prajāpati, the lord of creatures himself we find that vigour or *kṣatra* is considered a personification of Prajāpati.[99] Usually strength and power are identified with elements of nature like heat and sun and that is probably why *kṣatra* is connected with *grīṣma* or summer.[100]

This state was called *rājya* or *rāṣṭra*. The term *rāṣṭra* occurs quite frequently in Vedic literature, especially in the Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇas. Kingship and kingdom, monarchy and the state were identified with each other as the relation between the two was inseparable. In the *Atharvaveda* a king is enjoined to honour his *vrātya* guest better than himself so that his *rāṣṭra* and *kṣatra* may not be offended.[101] The close relation between *kṣatra* and *rāṣṭra* is well expressed in the phrase, "Kingship is State indeed."[102] The same Brāhmaṇa further states: "The king residing in his state is deemed well established."[103] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* also echoes the same sentiment when it observes "Kings are the upholders of

states; they maintain or protect the kingdom."[104] The precious possessions of a king (the *kṣatra*) are aptly expressed when the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* succinctly declares, a contented and honoured *purohita* or priest leads a king to heaven and makes him possess *bala, rāṣṭra* and *viś*. Dishonoured the *purohita* destroys all the three.[105] The king was looked upon as the symbol of vigour, strength and state.[106]

Finally coming to the term *kṣatriya,* Pāṇini observes that the *sūtra* is *kṣtradghaḷ* and will denote an *apatya* (child of Kṣatra). As the suffix *gha* is admissible only in case of a group, here it refers to the descendants of the Kṣatras, i.e., the Kṣatriya *varṇa*. This is confirmed by his providing a separate rule for an individual descendant who is called a Kṣātrī.[107] Thus it is quite clear that the term *kṣatriya* is derived from *kṣatra*. The word *kṣatriya* is not met with frequently in the *Ṛgveda* unlike the term *kṣatra*. The term *kṣatriya* usually occurs in relation to gods like Agni, Mitra, Varuṇa or Indra.[108] In *Atharvaveda* also the term *kṣatriya* probably stands for *rājā* or king.[109] However, by the time of the later Vedic literature,[110] the word *kṣatriya* is seen strongly embedded as representing the Kṣatriya *varṇa* to the extent that the concept of four castes is extended to the realm of gods, and even to the animal and vegetable kingdoms. Sāyaṇa, the commentator, observes that

> there are four castes among gods as well. Among them Agni and Bṛhaspati are Brāhmaṇas. Indra, Varuṇa, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, and Yama are Kṣatriyas. Vasus, Ādityas and Viśvedevāḥ Maruts are Vaiśyas among the gods. Pūṣaṇa is Śūdra.[111]

God Indra is usually represented as a Kṣatriya and Bṛhaspati as Brāhmaṇa.

Among the animals the goat is Brāhmaṇa, the horse is Kṣatriya, the ass is both Vaiśya and Śūdra.[112] In the Vegetable kingdom *palāśa* is Brāhmaṇa[113] and *dūrvā* grass is Kṣatriya.[114]

The Kṣatriya was the owner of the land and the Brāhmaṇa, Vaiśya and Śūdra were tenants. For this reason, it is stated in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* that the priestly class, the nobility and the Vaiśya had to beg the king for land to perform sacrifices, whereas the king himself had to beg the same from the Sun-god who is the divine *Kṣatra* for this purpose.[115] Here we find the use of the term *kṣatra* to distinguish a ruler from the other members of the same *varṇa*.

Since the age was one of warfare, especially with the Aryans expanding, the frequent inroads of the Dasyus and other tribal chiefs, constant warfare

and skirmishes were rampart and the order of the day. The Kṣatriyas were mainly engaged in these fights leading to the epithet "Fighting is Rājanya's strength."[116]

The high esteem of the Kṣatriyas can be gleaned from this, as the Kṣatriya was born, i.e., the overlord of all beings was born; the employer of the commoner was born; the slayer of the enemy was born, the protector of the Brāhmaṇas was born.[117]

Thus we see that the terms *kṣatra* and *kṣatriya* originally denoted powerful and mighty gods representing princely wielders of power. Slowly this concept underwent changes and the terms came to be connected with the human wielders of power. However, the terms *kṣatra* and *kṣatriya* in the sense of a ruler or a person belonging to the ruling class is found in a few places in the *Ṛgveda*.[118] This restricted use of the term *kṣatriya* or *rājanya* to denote only the ruling class underwent a change with the advent of the Sūtra era when the concept of heredity became stronger than the principle of occupation. The term *kṣatriya* became more broad based and included all those engaged in the ocupation of fighting.[119]

Thus to all intents and purposes, a Kṣatriya meant a warrior; a meaning which became general in the epics.[120] By now there was a total identification of both the Kṣatriyas and the Rājanyas. The terms became synonymous of each other in later Sanskrit literature. Pāṇini mentions the term *rājanya* with other political terms like *gaṇa, saṁgha,* and *grāmaṇi*.[121] He further points out that Rājanya was a descendant of the king.[122]

A similar concept is visible in the Pāli text. The Khattiya of the Pāli text corresponds to the Vedic Rājanya and is applied to the princes and their kinsmen only and not to the warriors in general who are called Jodhas or Balakayes.[123]

R. Fick also analyses the different meanings offered for the word Khattiya. He shows that in a broad sense the Pāli *khattiya* is the same as the Sanskrit *kṣatriya* meaning warrior. However, he points out that actually the term endorses a member of the ruling classes which includes the king, his great lords and vassals, along with the higher portions of the army and the word warrior is applicable only on certain occasions. If we further "filter" the meaning of the term we will see that it corresponds to the Vedic Rājanyas and is applicable only to the descendants of the victorious Aryans and it was only during an emergency like a war that the Khattiyas prime

function came to be regarded protection and they were looked upon as warriors.[124] The author further observes that kings of great monarchies and ruling princely families of smaller states belonged to the Khattiya class.

The *Pāli-English Dictionary* relates the term "Khattiya" to "a member of one of the clans or tribes recognised as of Aryan descent."[125] A similar view is expressed in the *Vedic Index of Names and Subjects*. According to it, the term "Khattiya" points "to the member of the Aryan nobility who led their tribes in battle to conquer and also for those aboriginal tribes who anyhow were able to maintain their status as princes in spite of the conquests."[126] "Lord of the Fields" is what is meant by Khattiya[127] so this was another expression which arose. He charmed the others by Dhamma by what ought to charms is what is meant by "Rājā;" which became the other standing epithet.[128]

Here a brief idea about the etymology of the word *kṣatra* will help us to understand its origin. One is so familiar with the concept of *kṣatra* representing power and strength that it appears very strange that in its earliest etymology *kṣatra* is not used as a synonym of strength or power of might—in all that we call *bala*. Surprisingly *kṣatra* is seen as a synonym of *dhana* or wealth and *udaka* or water.[129] This analogy may be explained if we consider *kṣatra* to be life-giving. As both wealth and water are important for life, we can now understand why the term has been used as a synonym of both these words.

The commentator Sāyaṇa explains *kṣatra* as the power that saves from hurt[130] Leading to its final identification with *bala* or power and might.[131] The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* also explains the term *kṣatra* as life because it saves (*trā* meaning to protect) from *kṣa—kṣatra,* i.e., hurt. In Pāli literature the word *khattiya* is said to originate from the root word *khatta*[132] meaning possession, power and rule.

We can conclude on the note that *kṣatra* and life are closely connected. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* expresses it well when it states "in the beginning the world was Brahma, one only. Being one he was not developed. He created still further a superior form the Kṣatra-hood, even those who are Kṣatras (rulers) among the gods Indra, Varuṇa, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Mṛtyu, *Īśāna*. . . ."[133] This idea slowly became identified with might and power needed to save life. Ultimately this concept crystallised into the idea of Kṣatriya the possessor of such might and power whose duty, nay sacred *dharma* was to fight and protect the people. For the king, the Kṣatriya par excellence, was more than merely an instrument of diplomacy. It was a sacred duty.[134]

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   Uru tad asya yad Vaiśaḥ padbhayan Śūdro ajayata //
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    Vaiśya Svajātyā videt tāsvapatyamsama bhavet //
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tadek sanna Vyavaktaccheyo //
Rupamtyasṛjat Kṣatraṁ Yānyetāni /
devta kṣatrānnidro Varuṇa //
Somo Rudra Parjanyo Yamo Mṛttyurīśān /
iti tasmat kṣatrātparaṁ nāsti //
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Varṇadharmairejīvantyo Vyarudhyanta parasparam /
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Kṣatriyānām balam daṇḍa yuddhajīvamādiśat //
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CHAPTER 3

Polity

ORIGIN OF KINGSHIP

THIS QUESTION is one of the most intriguing and controversial in political history. There is no single complete work of ancient Indian polity dealing with this topic systematically. We have to draw our conclusions from stray references found in Vedic, Epic, Pāli and other secular literatures.

When the Vedic Aryans emerged in the forefront, they consisted of a number of tribes. They were a cultural rather than a racial group whose cultural identity was established by about 3000 BC.[1] By the sixth century BC settled agricultural village economy had replaced the semi-nomadic pastoral life of the early Aryans.[2] Society in the Vedic period was consanguineous patriarchal, patrilinear and usually monogamous. Several families of *kulas* made a *viś* or a local community. The tribe or the *jana* was a conglomeration of several *viśas*. These *viśas* were probably fighting units kept ready for any emergency as it was the period of warfare and conquest. The *kulapatis* who demonstrated extraordinary leadership qualities would be promoted to the position of *viśapati*.[3] Similarly those *viśapatis* who excelled in strength and power would rise to the status of *janapati*. This is the basic concept of the political institution of early India. Here, of course, conjecture plays a large role in interpreting the indigenous words. However, we can with certainty say that the powerful patriarch was the precursor of the king.

From earliest times the ability to lead in war was one of the foremost requisites for becoming a king showing the importance attached to military leadership in the Hindu theories of the origin of government.[4] The first speculation about the origin of kingship occurs in the *Aitareya*

Brāhmaṇa.[5] We are told that in a war between the gods and the demons or *asuras* the former were constantly defeated. The gods attributed these disasters to the fact that they had no king. Therefore they assembled and decided to make Soma their king. In another place we find the disunited, defeated gods seeking Indra as their leader. They yielded to Indra because he was the most illustrious and powerful.[6] Thus it becomes obvious that in ancient India kingship was the answer to hostile pressure.

This brings us to the question of the divine origin of kingship. In the *Ṛgveda* there is an oblique reference to divine appointment.[7] In a coronation ceremony it is urged "this man hath Indra established made secure by a strong oblation." Indra establishes the king and prayers are offered to Varuṇa, Bṛhaspati, Agni, and Indra to keep the reign intact. We have called it an oblique reference because in the same hymn there is the mention "let all the people wish for thee, let not thy kingship fall away," thus diluting the stringency of the divine origin concept.

The Brāhmaṇa literature also provides us with similar references of divine origin. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*[8] it is mentioned that Varuṇa within the waters hath set him down for preserving order for overlordship, for paramount rule, for self rule, for sovereignty, for supreme authority, for kingship, for great kingship for suzerainty, for supremacy, for preeminence the wise one. This concept is further expanded and supported by the insertion that the Vasus anoint the king in the eastern part, probably of the world or may be only India, the Ādityas in the western part, in the southern the Rudras dominate and all gods jointly undertake the work in the northern sections, while the Sādhya and the Āpatya gods perform the anointment in the middle section. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* declares Sūrya as supreme and that he rules the world by means of good or bad kings.[9]

The indication of divine appointment is found in the epics as well. In Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* there is reference to the people approaching Brahmā for the appointment of a king among men like Indra among the gods.[10] In the *Mahābhārata*[11] too there is a reference to the gods appointing a king as the remedy to the pernicious nature of man. In the Śāntiparva it is said that like tigers and other carnivorous animals, people devoid of self-restraint always inspire all creatures with dread. For harnessing these men the Self-Born (Brahmā) created kings. In another place it is stated that a person who has exhausted all his merit comes to the world as king, who actually is nothing but a portion of Viṣṇu. He excels in knowledge and thus obtains superiority over others. "Established by the gods no one

transcends him. It is for this reason that everybody acts in obedience to one and it is for this that the world cannot command him."[12]

A very interesting passage in the *Mahābhārata*[13] deals with the question of authority. Here prince Yudhiṣṭhira asks why,

> having hands and arms and neck like others, having an understanding and senses like those of others, . . . possessed of vital airs and bodies like other men, resembling others in birth and death, in fact, similar to others regarding all the attributes of men, why does one man, the king, govern the rest of the world consisting of many brave and intelligent persons?

The sage Bhīṣma answers by describing the end of the golden age and the emergence of the human jungle where men no longer protect one another. Viṣṇu was asked to appoint a man to control this situation. The god created the Virajas but he gave up his claim to kingship, and his son and grandson also followed suit. Finally Anaṅga consented to govern and was renowned for piety and competence. But his son and grandson did not live upto his reputation and expectation. His grandson Venā was so wicked that the sages slew him and from his arm drew forth Pṛthu who was well versed in the Vedas and the science of *daṇḍa*. He was the righteous king.

The same idea is found in the quotation "having installed the king Pṛthu over all these, Hari and Brahmā parcelled out sovereignty unto others. The Lord Hari conferred the sovereignty of the Brāhmaṇas and plants on the moon, that of water on Varuṇa, Vaiśravaṇa was the king of riches, Viṣṇu the lord of the sun, . . ." thus describing the kings of various animlas, vegetables and minerals.[14]

Somewhat different in view is the account in *Vāyupurāṇa*.[15] Instead of a state of nature, we are informed that in spite of the establishment of the *varṇāśrama dharma* people did not follow their respective duties and came into conflict. Therefore they approached Manu who created the first two kings, Priyavrata and Uttānapāda and they were vested with the *daṇḍa* or the rod of authority.

In a much later age we find Manu postulating a similar theory. He says god created the king to protect the world in the absence of any lord and the people were fear-stricken.[16] Manu also refers to the *matsya-nyāya* or the survival of the fittest. In such a situation a king is a must. According to Manu the king is the great divinity in the form of a man.[17] The composition of the divinity is explained thus: the king consists of parts of Soma, Agni, Arka, Anila, Indra, Vittapati, Kubera, Varuṇa and Yama, the eight guardians of the world. The king also represented the four

ages—asleep, the king was Kaliyugam, awake, he was the Dvāparayugam, engaged in business he represented Tretāyugam, and going to war the Kṛtayugam.[18]

In all the above mentioned references one can note a latent view of the divine right concept. But authors like Charles Drekmeier totally refute the concept of divine origin. According to him, "Nothing in Vedas suggest divine nature of king. In the Vedas the king is at most likened to Indra." According to the later Brāhmaṇas, he say, "It is not hereditary divinity that we find in the hymns but rather an analogy with the gods. . . . There is more evidence in the Vedas that the gods became kings than that the kings became gods."[19] The question and answer session, *saṁvāda* between Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīṣma can also be analysed in a different light. Here the prince does not claim any divinity for himself. On the contrary he asks why one man has the right to rule over others. "The account contains justifications of authority in terms of function charisma, heredity, subordination to the Brāhmaṇas, and finally, divinity itself."[20]

On the contrary, reputed historians such as John W. Spellman staunchly believe that one cannot disregard these references to divine origin so easily.[21]

We feel that one cannot really establish the veracity of the concept because the material available is too meagre. Probably the Kṣatriya rulers at the helm encouraged the circulation of such a concept as it strengthened their position. The Brāhmaṇas, of course, certainly would not have liked total insubordination, so there was always the dilution of the theory by the convention of the oath to the king being administered by the gods and sages: or, by the unwritten stipulation that even if the king attained supremacy, he relied finally upon the Brāhmaṇa. Yet the realisation by both the upper castes that a close alliance between them was a necessity to keep in obeyance the economically powerful Vaiśyas and the "physical labourers" the Śūdras in short the people of the land—made them shroud their origin in mystic mystery. Thus a peculiar kind of divinity which does not resemble the Divine Right Theory of the West evolved. The king never became a god, but certainly like a god.

The ancient Brāhmaṇic literature, specially the *Mahābhārata* contains references of kings being appointed by *ṛṣis*. Here of course the *ṛṣis* themselves possess divine qualities and strength. They too are god-like, in fact the gods also fear the *ṛṣis*' wrath.

The Vedas, being our earliest literature, one of them, the *Atharvaveda,*

has an illustration of such an appointment.

> Desiring what is excellent, the heaven-finding *ṛṣis* in the beginning sat down in attendance upon (Upaniṣad) ardour (and) consecration, thence was born royally, strength and force, let the gods make that submissive to this man.[22]

The *Mahābhārata*[23] records that when Rāma had exterminated all the Kṣatriyas, it led to anarchy. Then, the sage Kaśyapa, at the behest of the Earth, performed a *yajña* or sacrifice and installed a number of kings to protect her. In another section the same sage is seen preforming a great *yajña* in alliance with Brahmā. From this sacrifice was born the sword of Asi to protect the world and destroy the voracious and pernicious enemies. After the victory of the gods over the *asuras* (demons) this sword was offered by the *ṛṣis* to Indra who in turn gave it to Manu after he was told that as lord of all men he should protect all creatures.[24]

When the *dānavas* had been defeated by Śiva, seven ancient *ṛṣis* installed Indra as the ruler among gods and decided to hold the rod or *daṇḍa* over mankind. The *ṛṣis* were followed by king Vipṛthu and others.[25]

There are many more similar references to the appointment of kings by *ṛṣis* in the *Mahābhārata*. Like Spellman, we may group them as semi-divine appointments.[26]

In Indian political thought the sinful nature of man legitimates compulsion; the state is indeed the *sine qua non* of existence.[27] This brings us to the concept of contract and a study of this will give us a fairly comprehensive idea of the rise of the Kṣatriya class. Historians differ about the validity of this concept as well. One has probably to choose the middle path in analysing it. Here too the seeds of the contract theory are seen not in the evolving of an entirely familiar contractual theory as promulgated by modern historians. The contract may have been both social and governmental. We shall not get into controversies regarding this but limit ourselves to what is relevant to our topic. The hymn in the *Ṛgveda* mentioned earlier, and the line "let all the people desire thee" has been seen by some historians as the beginning of contract. The historian K.P. Jayaswal[28] in his book shows how this is so. He, of course, inserts the words "as king" in his interpretation which is not in the original text. However, this contention is challenged by historians like P.V.Kane who feel it cannot be insisted with surety that the hymn was actually sung during a coronation ceremony. He says that it could be a hymn of benediction for someone who was already a king.[29]

Other evidences given like "the people (viśas) chose thee . . ."[30] or that during a Rājasūya sacrifice the *ratnins* give the kingdom to the king[31] may indicate popular consent or participation, but there is nothing indicating a social contract or a proper give and take relationship.

The first hint of the contractual theory appears in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*[32] but the idea really flowers and evolves into a proper theory only in Buddhist literature. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* we find Indra the king is required to take an oath before the consecrating priest. "From the night of my birth to that of my death, for the space between these two, my sacrifice and my gifts, my place, my good deeds, my life and my offspring mayest thou take if I play false." Here again we find that is the spirit of the passage that is more like a contract than the actual terminology.

The Hindu governmental contract was actually an exchange of taxes for protection and the king's authority was limited by sacred law. There is nowhere any suggestion that the people were the ultimate source of power. Only an embryonic development of the theory is found in the *Mahābhārata*[33] where it is meant for "inspiring confidence among all classes of people."

The contract theory here is more related to the concept of what authorises one person to rule others. This power or authority is something which lies outside the individual. It may reside in certain procedures of in the possession of status.[34] Drekmeier rightly points out that those who see the contract as an evidence of popular authority often overlook the status factor which basically provides eligibility.[35] We feel this is more true since an embryonic caste system had already developed and each caste had a status in society. Just as Brahmanic authority was legitimised by a combination of sacred tradition and merit, temporal authority was based on a concept that contained diverse elements.[36]

The most graphic description of the contract theory is found in Buddhist literature. Buddhism was a reaction to staunch Brahmanism. The source of the religion lay in the Kṣatriya caste, so naturally, their literature portrayed the Kṣatriya, the *rājan*, or the king, as the redeemer of all from the state of nature.

The *Dīghanikāya*[37] refers to a golden age when the ethereal dominated the corporeal and men danced in the air. Slowly the appetites manifested themselves, social institutions evolved, but men became slaves to their passions. The idyllic conditions began to disappear, that is, when the

election of a leader became imperative. Thus came into existence the Great Elect who in return for the protection, gave a share of the grain.

Now it may be argued that this was a proper contract, that the king drew his authority from the those who chose him and was paid for fulfilling the terms of the contract. But one should not jump to conclusions when dealing with ancient Indian history. Even Brāhmaṇical texts postulate the appearance of a saviour to restore order.

In the *Mahābhārata*[38] too we see men after the fall from absolute *dharma* degenerated to the rule of fang and claw. The world had become the workshop of the devil. *Daṇḍa* or coercion became imperative to maintain order. *Dharma* cannot exist without *daṇḍa* in a world of imperfect men. Thus the contract was not so much control over the monarch as an authorisation of a strong Kṣatriya control.

Hence the question arises whether the Buddhist description of the contract is more a glorification of Buddha or an actual description of the rise of the state.

Often the elective principle[39] in Jātaka[40] literature is used as illustration for a social contract theory in ancient India. The famous legend about the robber Kayavaya[41] who was the son of a Kṣatriya father and Niṣāda mother, and was elected king by the people, also testifies to the election of a leader who excels in righteous qualities.

But there remains a gulf between the actual contract theory that bases government on the consent of the people and also prescribes the sanctions that the people can take against an oppressor, and just the selection of a leader and remunerating him for his services. It is actually *dharma* that is supreme therefore, both the king and the people by accepting the framework of social duty enter into an indirect contract.

The *Arthaśāstra*[42] of Kauṭilya also gives us a glimpse of the social contract theory,

> people suffering from anarchy (*matsya-nyāya*) first made Manu, the Vaivasvata, to be their king, and allotted one-sixth of the grains grown and one-tenth of merchandise as sovereign dues. Remunerated in this manner the kings maintain the safety and security of their subjects. If the kings do not impose punishment and taxes (properly) they are answerable for the sins of their subjects . . . the king stands in the place of Indra and Yama, and kings are visible dispensers of punishment and rewards, whoever disregards kings will be visited with divine punishment. Hence kings shall never be despised.

Here, too, it is the fear of the supernatural that restrains the king. It is

not a straight contract of the king receiving his authority from the people who in turn can remove him if he fails to fulfil his duties. It is the pervasive fear of anarchy that dominates the ancient Indian political thought. Nowhere is there mention of how individuals come together to choose a leader. Almost all the sources speculating on the origin of the state refer to the state of nature.[43] The entire body of evidence points to the fact that it was the warrior, the fighter, the leader who rose to the status of a king, that whoever achieved that power came to be regarded as a Kṣatriya. In fact kinghip was one of the most important Kṣatriya *dharmas*. In course of time it became necessary to be a Kṣatriya to be eligible for kingship. R.S. Sharma[44] shows how *varṇa* played an important role in the formation of the state. One of the examples cited by him is when people failed to fulfil their respective caste functions, "Having become aware at this fact the Lord Brahmā prescribed *daṇḍa,* criminal justice and war as the profession of the Kṣatriya."[45]

Thus we see that the Kṣatriyas were emerging as the supreme temporal authority. However, we must always remember that the Indian king never enjoyed the immunities that accompanied the European concept of divine right. Only when he is virtuous and self-restrained and only when he fulfils the Kṣatriya *dharma* of protecting and looking after the welfare of the subject is the king like a god. The *Mahābhārata* states that only the king is able to perform the Kṣatriya functions in a crisis. If he is incapable he should be abandoned like a leaky boat.[46] Bhīṣma observes, "such a king must be slain like a mad dog." It is interesting to note that no matter how great the prestige of royalty was, it never developed into a real theocracy on the basis of divine right. Absolute monarchy never developed because we find in spite of a supreme ruler the vassal kings also enjoyed similar divinities and sovereignty in their respective areas. We can summarise the whole prevalent concept by the single statement that according to the codes there was a threefold function of kingship—an aristocrat, a hero and a commander of armies.

Indirectly this points to the rise of Kṣatriya power.

Eligibility of the Rulers

The Kṣatriya order was distinguished from other functional groups. In them was vested political responsibility along with the power and authority it carried. The general status and hierarchy contained in the caste

divisions invested the nobles with the role of the instrument of *dharma*. The pinnacle of glory for them was the achievement of kingship and it was not easy to achieve. Many factors had to amalgamate to make one king.

The kingly ideal was one of the most stringent so far recorded. According to Kauṭilya,[47] "the excellent king is 'Born in a high family, endowed with good fortune, intelligence and spirit, given to seeking the advice of elders, pious, truthful in speech, not breaking his promise, grateful, liberal, of great energy, not dilatory with weak neighbouring princes, resolute, not having a mean council (of ministers) desirous of training, which are the qualities of one easily approachable'." The *Arthaśāstra* certainly set a very high standard for one who could be king. It is a wonder if anybody lived upto these standards "eloquent, bold, endowed with memory, intellect and strength exalted, easy to manage, trained in the arts, free from vices, able to lead the army, able to requite obligations and injury in the prescribed manner, possessed of shame, able to take suitable action in calamity and in normal conditions . . . well-guarded, not laughing in an undignified manner, with a glance which is straight and without a frown, devoid of passion, anger, greed, stiffness, fickleness, troublesomeness and slanderous, sweet in speech, speaking with a smile and with dignity, with conduct conforming to the advice of elders—these being the personal excellences."[48] Now it becomes quite obvious that one had to be superhuman to qualify for kingship. However, this gives us an idea how kingship as an institution was placed on a pedestal.

Among the early Aryans, Indra the great warrior was the most popular deity. Then came the other popular warrior nomadic heroes, nature deities and the Gāyatrī Solar cult.[49] It was the age of the fierce, ruthless Aryans for whom life was a long warfare. Naturally physical prowess and military skill were considered the most important criterion for a person aspiring to be king. One of the coronation ceremonies (Vājapeya) included a chariot race in which the king had to emerge a victor. This again relates to military superiority, tested via the chariot race. This ceremony elevated the king to the position of *samrāṭ*, the all powerful ruler.[50] Like Indra, he who was the mightiest, the most powerful, the strongest, the most real, the best to accomplish,[51] would be selected king. Charles Drekmeir also suggests that the elders of the community probably selected the leaders in battle. With the advent of peace the chief among these warriors would be

retained in authority, perhaps to supervise the distribution of the spoils of war or to assume responsibility for preparedness against attack and the organisation of future campaigns.[52] The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*[53] in the reference to the *mahābhiṣeka* of Indra corroborates the concept of strength as a dominant characteristic for kingship.

> The lordly power hath been born, the Kṣatriya hath been born, the suzerain of all creation hath been born, the breaker of citadels hath been born, the slayer of the Asuras hath been born. . . .

In an age when chivalry, heroism and military functions dominated, able bodied men must have been preferred. Another view is that the king is sacred and sacredness can only reside in able-bodied men. Defectives are therefore inelligible for kingship.[54] The *Mahābhārata* also furnishes us with references corroborating the "able and healthy body as an important criteria. Pāṇḍu the younger son received the kingdom because his brother was defective for the gods do not approve of a defective king."[55] Devāpi, too had defective limbs; he was afflicted with a skin disease, possibly leprosy. The priests, the seniors (the old councillors), the inhabitants of the city and of the country forbade his consecration and suggested installation of his younger brother Śāntanu.[56] Presumably, the first king appointed by the Aryans was not named as a judge but as a general. These personal and physical characteristics can probably be better explained in Weber's terms as "personal and gentile charisma."[57] It includes attributes like virtue, courage, etc. that are extraordinary and inspire respect. Such a man in an age of institutional changes was naturally considered the right choice.

King Kuru's selection was also made because "he is a virtuous man."[58] Manu and later Yājñavalkya while discussing inheritance exclude the impotent, outcastes, madmen and idiots, the blind and those with incurable diseases.[59] According to them, wisdom, perception, honesty, and the willingness to submit to canonical authority qualify a king and his coercive authority.[60]

Buddhist sources reflect a similar view when it disqualify for kingship those "born into a low family—the family of a scavenger or a hunter or a basket weaver or a wheelwright or a sweeper or in a family of some wretched man hard put to find a meal or to earn a living, where food and clothes are hard to get. Also, if he is ill-favoured, ugly, dwarfish, sickly, crooked, lame or paralysed.[61]

The texts also vividly describe the reprisals and repercussions that would occur if such a person became king and managed to be consecrated.

> He would be mutilated, having his hands and feet, ear and nose cut off. He would have to suffer many more tortures ultimately leading to being impaled alive.[62]

Thus we see that the general popular feeling rejected a physically unfit person and some one of low birth as king. To restrain such aspirants, stringent punishments were prescribed and warnings that he would be overthrown. Here a few words about caste considerations become inevitable.

"King" and "warrior" are sometimes said to be synonymous. One of the meanings of the word *rājan* is Kṣatriya. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[63] states that the Kṣatriya takes no delight in priestly functions and similarly a Brāhmaṇa takes no delight in the rank of rulership. One of the *varṇāśrama dharma* of the Kṣatriya was kingship. The Kṣatriya traditionally had two roles, the protection of the people in battle and the acquisition of wealth. Kings who were not of Kṣatriya lineage sought to legitimise their authority by forging Kṣatriya descent or exploiting the divinity myth.[64] Like the Brāhmaṇical texts the Buddhist texts also furnish us with different caste functions strengthening the concept of Kṣatriya as ruler.

> . . . none but the Brāhmaṇas offer sacrifice. None but the Khattiya exercise sway, the Vessas plough, the Suddas must obey. . . .[65]

The question that obviously arises here is whether the king *may* belong to a caste other than the warrior caste? There are certain references to kings belonging to other castes but one cannot be sure whether they represent exceptions or if it was an accepted feature. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[66] mentions a king belonging to the Ayogava class. Jātaka literature records kings belonging to the Brāhmaṇa caste.[67] Here of course the Bodhisatta represents the Brāhmaṇa. Among the historical references, we know for certain that the Śuṅgas and Kaṇvas were Brāhmaṇa kings and the most famous Śūdra king was Mahāpadma Nanda, the first of the Nandas. However, the prevalence of the concept of a Śūdra king was not readily popularised. Manu enjoins the *snātakas* to leave the country where the ruler is a Śūdra.[68] While the same Manu acknowledges a Brāhmaṇa who knows the Vedas as king.[69] In fact one of the horrors of the Kaliyuga is said to be that most of the kings would belong to the Śūdra caste and would perform the Aśvamedha *yajña*.[70]

The Buddhists as a reaction to the caste theory tried to preach,

> None is by birth a Brāhmaṇa none is by birth no Brāhmaṇa. By deeds is one a Brāhmaṇa or no Brāhmaṇa. By deeds one is farmer and by deeds an artisan, by deeds a trader too, by deeds one is a servant and a thief, by deeds a soldier and a celebrant, and even so a king is by deeds.[71]

We feel that this concept, though it had some influence among the unorthodox circles, remained a dead letter. Wherver we do find kings belonging to another caste it was more as an exception to the rule, in very unusual circumstances. For instance, when Yudhiṣṭhira asks, "Suppose the castes confused a hostile army appearing, suppose the regular troops defeated, then suppose some strong man should rise, even a priest, a man of the people caste, or a slave, if he protected the people (as king) would he do right or not?" Bhīṣma's reply is, "He that is a shore in a shoreless place, he that is a boat in a boatless place, whether he be a slave or whatever he be, is worthy of honour. Let the people honour him on whom when helpless they rely and prosper, let them honour him as if he were their own blood, for a priest without knowledge and a king without protecting power are but wooden elephants. He that protects good and drives evil away should be made king."[72] This actually refers to an emergency situation of political confusion, war and caste mixture, not a normal condition. Though one Buddhist text made an attempt to circulate the concept of caste as no bar, the other condemned the installation of a low-born which would lead to disas[illegible][73] All these thoughts naturally reflect the conflicts and controversies of a "[illegible]e" when political institutions were evolving new religions were em[illegible], in fact the whole fabric of society was undergoing a change.

In the c[illegible] of time as territorial states came into existence, the emphasis on military [illegible] prowess diminished and along with it the need for a completely ab[illegible]d men as kings. Kauṭilya in a answer to "which is better a diseas[illegible] r a new king," prefers the diseased king on the plea that he wou[illegible] ve his duties as usual but a new king may act according to his w[illegible] Here Kauṭilya actually distinguishes between a physically diseased and a morally diseased king.[74] This relates to the shift of importance from physical merits to moral virtues as a major component of the qualifications for kingship. We have already dealt with Kauṭilya's list of virtuous qualities. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*[75] also moral values like charity, chastisement, forgiveness, piety, truthfulness, firmness as well as prowess are the list of virtues that Vālī offers to Rāma as justification for Sugrīva ascending his throne.

A natural corollary to this emphasis of moral development along with physical skill was the growth of an extensive period of education and apprenticeship for the crown prince. Since in ancient Indian political thought moral values, besides being recognised as an important qualification for kingship, were also considered important restraints on royal despotism, the crown prince underwent rigorous character-training and discipline. A prince well versed in the Śāstric injunctions and other requisite administrative knowledge, besides having some practical experience of statecraft could ensure protection, peace and prosperity to the people if he shouldered the yoke of sovereignty.[76] (Details about the education and training of the prince have been discussed *infra,* pp. 57-71.)

Thus we see that it was certainly not a mean standard that one had to satisfy to qualify as king and it was only fit that for a king of such stature should be offered the following prayer. The hymn indirectly points to all qualities necessary for kingship:

"Increase, O Indra, this Kṣatriya for me; make thou this man sole chief of the clans [*viś*]; unman all his enemies; make them subject to him in the contests for pre-eminence.

"Portion thou this man in village, in horses, in kine; unportion that man who is his enemy; let this man be the summit of authorities (Kṣatra); O Indra, make every foe subject to him. Let this man be riches—lord of riches; let this man be people—lord of people; in him, O Indra, put great splendours; destitute of splendour make thou his foe.

"For him, O heaven-and-earth, milk ye much that is pleasant like two milch kine that yield the hot draught, may this king be dear to Indra, dear to kine, herbs, cattle.

"I join thee Indra who gives superiority, by whom men conquer, are not conquered, who shall make thee sole chief of people [*jana*], also uppermost of kings descended from Manu.

"Superior (art) thou, inferior thy rivals, whosoever, O king, are thine opposing foes, sole chief having Indra as companion, having conquered, bring thou in the enjoyments of them that play the foe.

"Of lion aspect, do thou devour all the clans [*viś*]; of tiger aspect, do thou beat down the foes; sole chief, having Indra as companion, having conquered, seize thou on the enjoyments of them that play the foe. . . ."[77]

Formal Education of the Kṣatriyas

During the period under study we find the Kṣatriyas at the helm of temporal power, especially in the person of the king. This kind of meteoric growth certainly could not have been achieved without some form of training or formal education. We find references as in the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*[78] saying "knowledge" leads to salvation and man acquires dexterity in the arts through it. The *Mahābhārata*[79] describes "knowledge" as an incomparable eye. Knowledge was regarded as the basis of man's superiority even in the early Vedic period.[80] Thus education was a means of getting superiority right from ancient times.

From the evidences available for this period, we have tried to glean the kind of education was granted to the class. The linguistic and literary development of the age was in turn the product of a suitable educational system.

Not much information is available about the education imparted to the Kṣatriya class in general. Most of the evidence relates to the education of the princely class among the caste.

Studying, sacrificing and giving are often declared as the three occupations common to all the twice-born castes. Student life began at the feet of the *guru*. The *guru* taught them not only the Vedas but also the cont gent sciences necessary for a full understanding and gaining maturity in worldly affairs.

It was handed over by one generation to another through oral transmissio... as indicated by the word *śruti* assigned to the sacred lore of the Aryans. The education of the child began with the Vidyārambha *saṁskāra*. Arrangements were made to educate a child when he attained the age of five.[81] The child was initiated into the alphabet. This ceremony generally followed the tonsure *(chauram)* ceremony. The most important ceremony connected with the commencement of formal education was Upanayana. The three varnas who had the right of Upanayana were denoted as Dvijas[82] for Upanayana is laid down as second birth,[83] the first being from the parents. The Buddhist form of education was not essentially different from the Brāhmaṇical education in theory and practice. In the Buddhist system also every novice after Pabbājja had to spend the first five years under the supervision of a teacher who was usually a Sthāvira. This sysetm was called *nissaya* (dependence on a preceptor).[84]

According to the Buddha, every novice must be taught the Vinaya and

the Dhamma and select a spiritual preceptor (*upajjhāya*). The Pabbajjā, a ceremony, like the Upanayana could be given to a boy not less than eight years of age. Like Upanayana it has also been compared to a spiritual birth.[85]

The boy was given a *daṇḍa* (staff) and *yajñopavīta* (sacrificial cord). When the student expressed his willingness to undertake the vow of *brahmacarya*, the teacher grasping down with the span of his right hand, the student's right shoulder, touches the part of his chest behind which his heart lies with the words "May I be dear to thy inviolate heart."[86] (The staff used by the different *varṇas* was to be made of the wood of different trees. The sacred thread worn by the higher *varṇas* was suspended from the left shoulder and kept under the right armpit.[87]) Again the teacher says "Under my will, I take thy heart, my mind shalt thy mind follow, in my word shalt thou rejoice with all my heart, may Bṛhaspati (lord of learning) join thee to me."[88] After this the teacher used to recite the Savitṛ *mantra* to the student.

After initiation the student was to dwell in the house of his *guru* for forty-eight years or less but never less than twelve years.[89] The *gurukulas*[90] of Vālmīki, Kaṇva, Sandīpani were located in sylvan retreats where they gave lessons. However, these centres of learning were not always located in solitude. It may be presumed from the rules prohibiting study on the occasion of death or robbers' raid in the village, that the schools were also situated in the villages.[91]

A well developed *āśrama* had various departments, like that of Veda, Rājanīti, Arthanīti, Vārtā, military affairs section, transport and conveyance section, and one teaching army organisation.[92] Some famous *āśramas* were, Naimiṣāraṇya[93] presided by Śaunaka, Kaṇva,[94] Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra,[95] Kāmayaka[96] on the banks of Sarasvatī and the one near Kurukṣetra.[97]

The education system was based upon what is known as the ancient system of *brahmacarya*[98] which laid more emphasis on life or (*caryā*) than mere learning or instruction. It was based upon a constant personal touch between teacher and pupil bound together by a spiritual tie[99] living in a common home (*śālā*).

The pupil was thus truly the *antevāsī*[100] of his *ācārya*. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*[101] throws some light on the *brahmacārī*'s alms-begging and simple living. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*[102] refer to the *antevāsī* which means one who stays with the teacher. According to Manu,[103] the use of honey, meat, perfumes, garlands, collyrium,

shoes, flavouring substances, umbrellas and violence were forbidden to a student.

A student was generally called *brahmacārī*.[104] The *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* gives the following description of *brahmacarya*.

> The initiation is the consecration in accordance with the texts of the Vedas of a male (of the three higher castes) who is desirous of sacred knowledge. 'Let him initiate a Brāhmaṇa in spring, a Kṣatriya in summer, a Vaiśya in autumn, a Brāhmaṇa in the eighth year after his conception, a Kṣatriya in the eleventh year, a Vaiśya in the twelfth year.'[105]

The ceremony may be deferred because of incapacity for study or other reasons to the ages of sixteen, twenty-two and twenty-four in the case of Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya respectively after which initiation could take place only after performing penance. The religious student belonging to the upper three classes of society was known by the special term *varṇi*,[106] a new title, unknown in the Saṁhitā and Brāhmaṇa literatures. As a pupil he was called *chātra*[107] because his duty (*chatramsīlamasye*) was to be always at his teacher's service (*gurukāryesvavahitaḥ*) and protect him from harm like an umbrella.[108]

Disapproved pupils were those who misused their privileges and contravened the rules proper for them, e.g., *tīrthadhvāṅkṣa tīrthakāka,* "fickle a a crow" in changing his teachers and schools too frequently,[109] *khaṭvārū* . "a pupil who takes to the luxury of a householder by sleeping on a cot."

In anoth *ra,*[111] Pāṇiṇi refers to both junior (*mānava*) and senior (*antevāsī*) st who joined their schools under motives deserving of censure, e.g. *bhikṣa mānava*), a novice attracted for its benefit of free boarding.[112] The *Rāmāyaṇa,* refers to the *mānavas* of the Kaṭha-Kālāpa schools a ed with delicacies of food (*svādukāmāḥ*), given to laziness (*alasāḥ* oiding due service to the teacher under pretext of study.[113]

Students derived names from three factors, viz., (1) name of the subject or treatise for study, (2) name of the Vedic school to which they belonged, and (3) name of the teacher under whom they were studying or whose works they studied.[114] Students were also named after the special seasonal courses which they were pursuing, e.g., the books that were taken up for study in the Vasanta (spring) season were also known as Vasanta, and the student who was reading that treatise or course at the assigned times classified as Vāsantika,[115] courses were similarly offered for the other

seasons: Varṣā, Śarad, Hemant, and Śiśira and the students called Vārṣika, Sāradika, Haimantika, and Śaiśirika.[116]

The system of short-term courses involving a study of special topics or parts of a subject was also in vogue as implied in the expression *tadasya brahmacāryan.*[117] It regulates the names of students according to the period for which they had got themselves admitted, e.g., Māsika Brahmacārī, a student for a month. Similarly, Ardha Māsika, a student for half a month, and Saṁvātsrika, a student for a year. The completing of study was called *samāpana.*[118]

The duties consisted of pleasing the teacher and observing rules conducive to the student's welfare, industry in studying. The student was to wear only one piece of cloth to cover his nakedness and preferably a skin as an upper garment,

> he shall avoid meat, honey, perfume, garlands, ointments, carriage, shoes, love, anger, sleep in daytime, covetousness, perplexity, garrulity, musical instruments, bathing (for pleasure), cleaning the teeth, elation, dancing, singing, slandering, and fear.[119]

A Brāhmaṇa for life and a Kṣatriya or Vaiśya at least during *brahmacarya* or studentship should not touch spirituous drink.

The pupil looked up to his teacher as his father.[120]According to the *Mahābhārata,*[121] the father and mother only procreate the body. The life which one acquires from the teacher is divine. The duty of the preceptor under the Hindu system of education was to assist the development of the moral as well as the intellectual culture of his pupil.[122] The *gurus* always treated their disciples with great affection. The latter therefore revered their teachers duly.

Balāki Gārgeya, the famous teacher, is mentioned as moving in the territories of Uśīnare, Matsya, Kuru Pañcāla, Kāśī Videha.[123] The teachers who wandered from one place to another were called *caraka.*[124]

Besides the Vedas, subjects such as phonetics, etymology, grammar, prosody, literature, chemistry, astronomy, and mathematics were taught with great zeal. Many other knowledges and arts such as snake-charming, demonology, and divination were also included.

The Vedas constituted the most important part of the syllabus in the ancient Indian programme of education.[125] Students had to study historical poems, ballads and heroic songs besides the sacred hymns, or Itihās-, Purāṇa, Nārāśaṁsi, and Gāthās. In order to understand the Vedas, properly six Vedāṇgas, Śikṣā (phonetics), Kalpa (rituals), Vyākaraṇa (grammar),

Nirukta (etymology), Chanda (prosody), and Jyotiṣa (astronomy) were taught. The following are the other branches of knowledge mentioned, Vidyā (Nyāya Mīmāṁsā or special sciences like Sarpavidyā,[126] Vākovākyam (philosophical dialogue or the art of disputation),[127] Ākhyāna (stories like "Śunaḥśepākhyāna),[128] Vyākhyāna (commentary or narrative), Brāhmaṇa (class of books), Rāśi (arithmetic), Nakṣatravidyā (astronomy), Bhūtavidyā (demonology), Kṣatravidyā[129] (science of ruling class), Dhanurveda according to Śaṁkara, Nidhi (treasure), Nītiśāstra (science of conduct), and Devajanavidyā.[130] Nārada's conversation with Sanatkumāra refers to dancing, singing and other fine arts.

It is interesting to note here that the Upaniṣads also speak of Supreme Knowledge (Parā Vidyā).[131]

The knowledge pertaining to the *Ātman* was an important subject of study of the students of the Upaniṣadic age.[132] The Jātakas mention among the subjects, Vedic literature (Brāhmaṇas, Saṁhitās, and Upaniṣads), the Arthaśāstra, *śilpa, vārtā,* philosophy, and religion.[133] Kauṭilya also refers to Ānvīkṣakī (logic), Traya (*Ṛgveda, Sāmaveda,* and *Yajurveda*), and Daṇḍanīti (science and art of government).[134]

The epics list the subjects, that the prince was expected to study.[135] It includes Lekyha Saṁkhyā[136] which indicates that the art of writing was known in this period. The Kuru princes Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Pāṇḍu and Vidura, were purified by the ceremonies, disciplined by learning and made proficient in the various branches of knowledge.[137] Pāṇḍu excelled in archery, Dhṛtarāṣṭra in personal strength. Pāṇḍu's sons studied all the Vedas and various texts on duty.[138] Draupadī's sons received their training in arms from Arjuna,[139] the sons of king Daśaratha in the hermitage of Viśvāmitra, princes Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa-Sudāmā in the *āśrama* of Sāndīpanī of Avantī,[140] Rāma's sons under sage Vālmīki.[141]

Studying all the Vedas could be a strict regulation only for the students from the priestly class. E.W. Hopkins feels that one can be predisposed to think that the students of the warrior and the commercial caste were permitted to give up studies under easier conditions as they were easily freed from the penances obligatory for priests.[142] The study of the Vedas often made the Kṣatriyas sufficient masters of that knowledge to be able to teach even the priestly pupils in times of need, when no priestly teacher was available.[143] This memorising of the Vedas was probably laid as a command only upon the king and not upon all members of the Kṣatriya caste.[144]

Added to the three occupations mentioned above, common to the three upper castes, was the special duty of living by the profession of arms and protecting people enjoined upon the Kṣatriyas. Therefore their education, inculcated the development of skills needed for warfare and acquisition of martial skills. The Kṣatriyas at the hermitage were taught swordsmanship, archery and club fights, horsemanship and other similar arts. Along with these the plastic arts like painting, music and dancing were also encouraged. These were normally forbidden to Brāhmaṇas. As an example, we find Bhīṣma, one of the greatest warriors, who took charge of the education of his nephews, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Pāṇḍu and Vidura, saw to it that besides being the usual studies they acquired proficiency in various athletic sports. Archery, club fights, use of the sword and the shield were also part of the curriculum. They became experts in horsemanship and the management of elephants. In the sphere of sacred lore the knowledge of the Nītiśāstra, the Itihāsa, Purāṇas, the Vedas, and the Vedāṅgas were not neglected. Again when the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu grew up, Bhīṣma took charge and found in Droṇa, the right preceptor to teach them the use of all weapons. Princes from neighbouring lands also came to Droṇa. He accepted Kṣatriya princes but not pupils of a low birth, e.g., Ekalavya.

Authors like E.W. Hopkins and N.K. Sidhanta have expressed doubts whether priestly learning formed originally a part of the warrior's training. They both feel that it is a late priestly addition.[145] Hopkins points out that in the epics the age of sixteen was seen as the terminus of boyhood and a young man or *yuvā* of that age was expected to be ready for war.[146]

Therefore it is inconceivable that a boy otherwise occupied in physical training should be master of the special skills of warfare and also acquire eloquence in Vedic hymns. Thus, he says that the law is later than the epic on this point and even then such knowledge was only to be assumed as desirable for the warrior in general. The active young knight as well as the busy trader must have performed their duties towards the sacred learning in a very perfunctory manner.

Though there was no check on a young warrior's desire to be Veda-learned the conventional activities of his caste limited most of his attention to arms. Therefore during the eight months or even yearly schooling they just went over the text of the Vedas. In fact, as mentioned earlier, the Epic age does not enjoin any strict spiritual study on the caste as a whole, but the king, theoretically, was to be acquainted with it. The Sūtra period allows some kind of compromise for the student. Instead of

memorising the whole he may even as an alternative to the *anuvāka* (a concession by itself) learn only as much as the *guru* ordained, or only the first and last hymn of each seer or at the beginning of each hymn just one verse.[147] A sort of commutation of learning seems to be implied.

Coming to the education imparted exclusively to princes or Kṣatriyas of royal blood we have various evidences of different kinds.

The childhood of the future king was spent in an atmosphere of special care and attention. His studies began from the age of three. By the time, he was eleven, economics and politics were included in his routine. The military arts of course, occupied a very important place in his young life. According to Jeannine Auboyer,[148] the mornings were spent in practising, i.e., the theory and practical aspect of the art of arms. The evenings were usually devoted to learning difficult lessons. At fixed timings the bards recited the Epics to the prince. During this entire phase of education the prince was kept away from the excitement and ostentation of the outside world. He remained in the palace observing respectful obedience to his elders. When the masters imparting knowledge felt that the prince had acquired sufficient understanding of all that was taught, they allowed him to undergo a period of apprenticeship under a senior administrator. Thus having gained practical knowledge the prince was usually sent to take charge of some military campaign. When satisfied with his training the king awarded him with governorship or viceroyship.

Buddhist literature also furnishes us with certain details about the education imparted to Kṣatriya. In the Jātakas the age at which a Kṣatriya youth goes to live with a *guru* is given as sixteen.[149] This is in accord with the prescribed time limit for studentship among the Kṣatriyas in the Sūtras.

On the attainment of the sixteenth year, it was considered the princes were discreet enough to pursue their studies abroad. Instances are rare where princes at the age of sixteen are mentioned as having completed their studies.[150] Parents were not opposed to the idea of sending their wards as they considered the luxurious, pleasure-filled comfortable life of the place not the right setting amidst which a prince should grow up.[151] By going abroad the princes would acquire valuable practical knowledge and learn to cope with discomfort and hardship thus, making them physically strong and encouraging them to bring their spirit of adventure into play.

The boys of various castes (excluding the Cāṇḍālas) who had come of age or attained the age of sixteen went to Takṣaśilā from Rājagaha, Mithilā, Kosala, Ujjayinī, and Vārāṇasī.[152]

One Jātaka contains an interesting piece of information about a teacher who had only princes as pupils on his rolls. There were a hundred and one princes, besides two newly admitted ones from the kingdoms of Kuru and Vārāṇasī.[153] Aśvaghoṣa's *Sūtrālaṁkāra* gives a list of subjects for the crown prince: "The Vedas, archery, medicine, sacrifices, astronomy, grammar, the origin of writing, the performance of sacrifices, eloquences, rhetoric, the art of love, interest, purity of families; the ten maims, computation, chess, dice, the study of origins, music and song, the art of playing on the conch, dancing, laughter, the art of the prestidigitarian, education, the making of garlands of flowers, massage, the science of precious stones and valuable materials for clothing silk, sealing, weaving, wax work, strategy, sewing, sculpture, painting, literature, arrangement of garlands, interpretation of dreams, interpretation of flights of birds, horoscopes of boys and girls, the training of elephants, the art of playing on the tembourine, the rules of battle array, the breathing of horses, the carrying of the lance, jumping, running, fording a river."[154] Thus we see there is similarity between the Hindu course of study and the Buddhist.

"Now, kings of former times, though there might be a famous teacher living in their own city, often used to send their sons to distant foreign countries to complete their education, that by this means they might learn to quell their pride and high-mindedness endure heat or cold and be made acquainted with ways of the world."[155] Thus the object of the education was most practical.

A list of the conventional subjects of study is found in many Jātakas. It usually comprised, the three Vedas and the eighteen or all liberal arts.[156] The same course was prescribed for the Brāhmaṇa student.[157] Usually, the prince had to pay a fee (*bhāga*) of a thousand pieces of *kārṣāpaṇa* (coins), *sahassaṁ, kahapaṇasahassāṁ.*[158] There were two classes of students, those who paid fees to the *guru* (*ācāriyabhāgedāyakā*) and those who offered their services in lieu of fees (*dhammantevāsikā*). The former group were more privileged and received their education during the day while the latter probably attended to the teacher's needs during the day and received the lessons at night.

The Jātakas note that the fees had to be paid at the commencement of the course but we have many references in the Brāhmaṇical works where

some kind of gift (*dakṣiṇā*) was made by the students at the end of the course.

The Tilamuṭṭhi Jātaka[159] gives a description of the preliminaries before admission. Here the prince of Benares is seen seeking the teacher's favours. When the prince reached the teacher's dwelling and paid his respects, the teacher welcomed the weary newcomer. After eating and resting when he approached his teacher and stood respectfully, the following conversation took place:

"Where have you come from?"

"From Benares."

"Whose son are you?"

"I am the son of the king of Benares."

"What brings you here?"

"I come to learn."

"Well, have you brought the teacher's fee? Or do you wish to attend on me in return for teaching you?"

"I have brought a fee with me," and thus he laid at the feet of his teacher, the purse containing a thousand pieces.

However, in spite of the system of fees, the teacher did not favour the rich over the poor. The princes had to leave aside their princely equipage and come in the robe of a humble student, knowing well that no earthly distinction was recognised in such institutions. Sometimes the proud, hot-blooded Kṣatriya could not adjust to the stringent moral and intellectual discipline, where the teacher was free to advise, chastise or beat him according to the mischief done. Such punishment was often looked upon as an insult by the young Kṣatriya and there are interesting stories in the Jātakas, of how the princes planned to avenge these by murdering the teacher when they became kings and how the teachers were saved.[160]

The teachers often showed keen interest in politics. In Dhonasakha Jātaka[161] we find the teacher advising a prince against achieving power by violence. He points out that such power does not last long and when it is lost one becomes like a ship wrecked at sea.[162] The teachers often gathered information about the internal affairs of the kingdoms from the princes and on the basis of the information tried to guide the princes for the future. From the reports, the teachers formed an idea of the future prospects of the prince. Besides this the teachers usually had an idea of the motives that fomented rivalries in politics and how these could

be averted without bloodshed. In this manner the teachers imparted practical knowledge to the princes. A Jātaka[163] mentions a teacher who presented five weapons to a prince before his departure, with the help of which the prince defeated a powerful enemy on the way.

After the completion of study, if the king was impressed, he usually appointed the prince as a viceroy or *uparājā*. Thus, the preparation for becoming the future king began.

In several Jātaka stories we read a boy leaving his home for receiving instructions at the age of sixteen.[164] But Fick says that it does not mean that before this age a child did not have any education at all. He is of the opinion that upto this age a boy was instructed in elementary sciences and physical education at home, perhaps by his father, and at this stage he was supposed to start the study of higher spiritual and religious subjects.[165]

Kauṭilya in his *Arthaśāstra,* says that the means of ensuring the pursuit of philosophy, the three Vedas and economics is the rod (wielded by the king); administration constitutes the science of politics, having for its purpose the acquisition of things, not possessed, the preservation of things possessed, the augmentation of (things) preserved, and the bestowal of the things augmented on a worthy recipient. The prince was to be trained in accordance with this.[166]

Kauṭilya[167] also insists that training, and discipline in the sciences can be acquired by accepting the authority and authoritativeness of the teachers in the respective sciences. After the ceremony of tonsure the prince learn the alphabet and arithmetic. When a *guru* was selected and the prince's initiation with the preceptor was performed, formal instruction in the three Vedas and philosophy began under the guidance of the learned. During this time the prince acquired knowledge in economics from the heads of departments, and in the science of politics from theoretical and practical exponents. The prince had to observe celibacy till his sixteenth year.[168] Then followed the ceremony of cutting his hair and marriage.

The prince was instructed to be in constant contact with elders so that every opportunity for improving his training could be utilized. During the first part of the day he learnt the art of using elephants, horses, chariots and weapons, thus gaining practical knowledge in the military arts. The latter part of the day was spent in listening to Itihāsa constituting the Purāṇas, Itivṛtta, Ākhyāyikā, Udāharaṇa, Dharmaśāstra, and the Arthaśāstra. During the remaining hours of the day and night the prince

had to engage in learning new things, revising what had been learnt and listening repeatedly to things that had not yet been learnt. For according to Kauṭilya from continuous learning or study is ensured a trained intellect and from the intellect stems practical application and from practical application results self-possession—such is the efficacy of science. The king trained in this manner, i.e., trained in the sciences and intent on discipline, enjoys the earth without sharing and is committed to the welfare of all beings.[169] The princes of the period often showed as much zeal as the Brāhmaṇas in the study of the Vedas, and other Śāstras and many of them went to study in the famous university of Takṣaśilā.

Later traditions in Vedic literature ascribe the authorship of many hymns to kings like Ambarīṣa, Ṛjrāśva, Traśadasyu, Tryaruna, Ajamidha, Sudāsa, Mandhātṛ, Pṛthi, Vainya Śibi, and Pratardana.[170] Though kings composed hymns which found their way into Brāhamṇical liturgies, Kṣatriyas very rarely performed the duties of a priest. Kings are mentioned even as teachers of the Vedas.[171] They too like the Brāhmaṇas often retired to the forests in their old age.[172]

The kingly class in almost all communities represent a cultured body. As the Brāhmaṇas became more stringent and jealous of their position they refused to accept new hymns. This would have totally shut off the Kṣatriyas from religious literature had not a new avenue in the form of the science of Upaniṣad opened its doors to one and all. In the metaphysical speculations of God and Soul, the Kṣatriyas and Brāhmaṇas took part on an equal footing. India being the meeting ground of three if not four entirely different cultures (Aryan, Draviḍian, Muṇḍa, and Mongolian) a sense of toleration grew. Brāhmaṇic religion never became so dogmatic as to keep the science of the Upaniṣad rigidly separated. In the new field kings like Ajātaśatru of Kāśī, Aśvapati of Kekaya, Pravāhana Jaivāli of Pañcāla, and Janaka of Videha made their mark.

The seeds of this new Upaniṣadic doctrine can be seen in the *Ṛgveda* as well as the Brāhmaṇas. Therefore it is not that the Kṣatriyas developed it as a revolt against the Brāhmaṇas.

Hopkins,[173] however, doubts whether they learned more than the art of arms and the general "Veda of the bow." He points out that when a seer really wished to know what the king had studied he asked him whether he understood the aphorisms regarding horses, elephants, chariots, the only Veda mentioned here being the Veda of the bow. Besides these, further

knowledge concerning poison, city life, military machines, magical weapons and sorcery constituted the practical knowledge of the king.[174]

Hopkins feels "the Rājās took a condescending interest customary to cultured royalty (in the new doctrine) and in which when they took part, were credited with victory." But N.K. Dutt in refutation of this view says that latter day Brāhmaṇa writers who were not strict about historical accuracy and who did not even record the names of the Brāhamaṇa founders of special sciences, attributing most of them to divine or semi-divine sources, could not with so much care preserve the names of historical Kṣatriya princes as teachers of the Upaniṣadic philosophy. It is more reasonable to suppose that if contemporary Brāhmaṇa writers associated the names of patron princes, latter day writers would have omitted them as derogatory to their dignity. Therefore, the Kṣatriya authorships of some of the philosophical works were not courtesy titles but too real to be ignored. The kings attained the distinction under the title of "Ṛājarṣi" or king sage.[175]

There is not much evidence available about the education of Kṣatriya girls. There is a reference in the *Mahābhārata* to the education of Draupadī. Bhīṣma says that her father took care to teach her writing and other arts. Besides the hermits, there was another group of teachers known as the wanderers or *paribbājaka*. These sophists wandered from place to place precisely with the object of engaging in informal discussion on matters of ethics and philosophy, nature lore and mysticism. Some of these wanderers were women.[176]

Thus women were involved in learning philosophy and attaining knowledge and not totally shut off from learning. Often halls were put up for the accommodation of these wanderers by the queens, e.g., the Hall in Queen Mallika's Park at Savatthi, the special space set aside in the fragrant *campaka* grove on the borders of the lake dug out by Queen Gaggara at Campā.[177] These again show that the queens were probably educated enough to understand the discussions held by the wanderers.

Both Pāṇini and later Pātañjali referred to women admitted to Vedic study in the *caraṇas*. The term *jāti* in a *sūtra*[178] includes female members of *gotras* and *caraṇas*. Thus a woman student of the Kaṭha school was called Kaṭhi and of the Ṛgvedic-Bāhvṛcya school Bāhvṛci. It appears that the three principles of naming the male students applied equally to the female students. Female students were also admitted to the study of Mīmāṁsā. Pāṇini refers to female students as *chatri* and their hostels as *chatriśālā*.[179]

The wife of an *ācārya*, is referred to as *ācāryānī,*[180] but *ācāryā* was the title of female teachers too corresponding in status to an *ācārya*.

In considering early Indian minstrelsy[181] we find the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* distinguishing very clearly the Kṣatriya minstrel from that of the Brāhmaṇa. The Kṣatriyas sang about war and strife and carried on the heroic tales. This again provides evidence of the type of education received by Kṣatriyas.

Kauṭilya emphasises the need of *vinaya* (discipline). A royal family with undisciplined princes, breaks up at the mere attack of the enemy like moth eaten wood at a slight touch.[182] Therefore the prince should learn discipline first from the teachers, later in the company of men of mature wisdom. The prince was to complete his discipline by the study of various subjects through the control of the senses. The prince had to practice non-attachment of the sense organs, and observe the precepts of the sciences to suppress the six vices. The six calamities of the king—day-sleeping, cowardice, anger, laziness, sluggishness, and tenderness are alluded to in the *Mahābhārata*[183] and acquire self-control. He who allows himself to be swayed by his sense organs and does not observe the precepts, perishes instantly even if he were the ruler of the earth surrounded by the four oceans.[184]

Stating the importance of *vinaya*, Manu says that the adoration of learned and pure men by the king is essential. The king should learn modesty from them for a king who is modest never perishes.[185]

Brāhmaṇical literature says that as the successor of a ruling king was chosen out of his many sons, virtually the very future of the state depended upon the proper education of the royal princes. The king had to take active part in sacrifices like Rājasūya, Vājapeya and Aśvamedha and repeat the *mantras* uttered by the priest, participation in sacrificial rites implies knowledge of sacred lore. It may not be unreasonable to presume that Kṣatravidyā, Ekāyana, Dhanurveda in addition to the Vedas must have formed the subjects of study for the princes. The main occupation of the Kṣatriya in the Vedic period was archery and chariot fighting. To what extent they paid attention to mental occupation is not certain.[186]

Supreme knowledge was not the exclusive attribute of the Brāhmaṇas. The Brāhmaṇa literature has preserved the names of illustrious princes like Janaka, Pravāhana Jaivāli, Ajātaśatru, and Aśvapati Kaikeya who excelled the Brāhmaṇas in the acquisition of higher knowledge. King Janaka of Videha instructed Yājñavalkya and Śvetaketu Āruṇeya.[187] The

Pañcāla king Pravāhana Jaivāli silenced Śvetaketu Āruṇeya and his father but also treated them as his disciples.[188] Bālāki Gārgya a learned Brāhmaṇa was similarly silenced and impressed by the superiority and depth of the learning of Ajātaśatru.[189] Aśvapati Kaikeya was another, approached by the five learned Brāhmaṇas for learning Vaiśvānara.[190]

Scholars like Macdonell and Keith[191] have doubted the absolute value of these instances for drawing any conclusion. That the average Kṣatriya was concerned with intellectual pursuits is not supported by evidence. In fact we have no record of the education of a Kṣatriya.[192] However, the examples of learned kings prove beyond doubt that the princes were sometimes given training in higher knowledge also, besides that in arms and administration.

Among the courses of study we see that the Mahābodhi Jātaka mentions the Pāli term "Khattavijjā."[193]

This has been analysed by Prof. B.C. Law[194] as meaning that those willing, and aspiring for the position of *senāpati* and other military ranks were required to study this branch of learning. The art of warfare, the forming of battle arrays, the mobilisation of forces, the methods of offence and defence, the training of the four divisions of army, the strategy, the principles of war and peace, the knowledge of handling of weapons of war, the maintenance of military discipline and control over the rank and file appear to have been subjects of study.

However, Khattavijjā according to Buddhist texts[195] refers to the low arts and wrongful occupations by which false ascetics and the Brāhmaṇas in contrast with the perfect Buddha indulged in. That is why the censure of the word *khattavijjā* in Buddhist texts is seen, as it is against their ethical standards. But we are not sure whether the Kṣatriyas really followed this *vidyā* or not. U.N. Ghoshal[196] conceives it to be a systematised body of knowledge which may be identified with the *Arthaśāstra* or the science of politics.

From the above mentioned evidences and references we can assume that the Kṣatriyas were an educated class. Their education was not neglected in spite of their temporal power. In fact some Kṣatriyas were not far behind the Brāhmaṇas in spiritual knowledge. Though there is an opinion put forward by L.B. Kenny[197] on the basis of the war operations, in the *Mahābhārata* that the people were in a barbaric stage, one cannot totally agree with him. It may be that some of the savage descriptions were incorporated to help the lay man understand the ferocity and strength of the heroes of the epics.

Whatever the differences in opinion, we can safely conclude that there was a system of education prevalent in those early days too.

The Prince

The birth of the crown prince was a time of mammoth celebrations. It was usual to name the new born babe on the Naming Day (*nāmagahanadivase*). The childhood of the future king was spent in great care and luxury. From the moment of his birth the prince was taken charge of by female nurses specially chosen by his father.

The prince began his studies from the age of three as we saw. During this period, he was kept away from the ostentations and excitements of palace life. He was usually sent to distant institutions to gain knowledge: "Dear son, go to Takṣaśilā and receive instruction in all learning at the hands of a world famous teacher."[198]

When the training was complete and he had attained majority, he was formally appointed heir apparent. From now onwards he was made in-charge of considerable functions in the administration.

The term "prince" if broadly deciphered, includes the brothers of the king in addition to his sons. Their importance can be gauged from the posts they held as prince. Vedic literature refers to *rājaputra*[199] presumably the king's son, and *rājabhrātṛ* meaning apparently the brother. In fact the *rājabhrātṛ* is included with the *purohita, mahiṣi, suta, grāmaṇi, kṣattri* and the *saṁgṛhīt* as a *vīra* or supporter of the monarchy.[200]

The Brāhmaṇa literatures while giving a list of the *ratnins* do not include the princes.[201] These same princes, however, played a significant part in the Rājasūya or coronation sacrifice. One of the rituals involved sprinkling the king with holy water from a wooden vessel by his relation alone.[202] Here Jogirāj Basu has interpreted the word *svā* used in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* as representing a close kin of the king which meant the son or the brother or any other relation. At the end of the sprinkling ceremony, the king poured the leftover holy water into the Brāhmaṇa's pot and passed it to his dearest son praying, "May this son of mine perpetuate this vigour of mine."[203] In another ceremony the sacrificial wooden sword was passed by the priest to the king's brother or son before the game of dice.[204] Further it is mentioned that the seasons were the brothers of King Soma, and that they were with him, as the brothers of an earthly king are always with him.[205]

The Epics are replete with references to princes involvement in peace-time administration as well as being in the forefront during wars.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* mentions the *yuvarāja* (the young crown prince) as one of the *tīrthas*[206] or high officials. It was probably in the interest of the king and his kingdom that the princes were included in the administration. Romila Thapar[207] has rightly pointed out that to reduce their own administrative burden and impart to the princes practical training of administration, kings enlisted their help in discharging both civil and military function.

The king and the royal family were all important in the heroic state. The princes along with the kings participated, in the administration, expansions and defence of the kingdom. The *Rāmāyaṇa* provides us with the example of Rāma and his brothers conquering vast territories.[208] In the *Mahābhārata* the kinship ties between the brothers are shown as an ideal. We find that when Yudhiṣṭhira had been installed king his brothers conducted many campaigns to collect revenue for the Rājasūya sacrifice.[209]

Besides the instances of these military adventures we find the princes in the capacity of administrators as well in the Epic. King Rāma's sons Kuśa and Lava were made in-charge of Kuśāvatī (Kasiya) and Śarāvatī (Śrāvastī) respectively.[210] Even Rāma's brother's sons were placed in responsible posts. An example being Bharata's son Takṣa who was given the province with Takṣaśilā as the capital for governing while his other son Puṣkala became the administrator of the province with Puṣkarāvatī (Puṣkalāvatī) as the capital.[211]

The importance of the prince can further be gauged by the fact that they were entrusted with administration and protection by the kings in their absence. A conspicuous example of this responsibility is the war between Uttara and the Kaurava princes for the kingdom of Virāṭa.[212] This story of course gives more importance to prince Arjuna's bravery and superior military skill in assisting Uttara. However, we cannot overlook the fact that the princes were considered important enough to be entrusted with the responsibility of the protection of a kingdom.

The *Mahābhārata* also states that newly conquered territories should be placed under the guardianship of the brother of a king or his grandson.[213]

The Buddhist texts also corroborate the concept of princes as important components of the administrative set-up. If the prince succeeded

in impressing his father with his accomplishments he was appointed to the post of *uparājā* or viceroy.[214] In the Jātakas the crown prince is called the *uparājā* and the other the *senāpati* or commander-in-chief. On the death of the father the *uparājā* becomes the king and the *senāpati* the *uparājā*. Historian Agrawala records an instance of two sons, one the *uparājā*.[215] We are all familiar with the names of King Prasenjit and Vidudabha. King Prasenjit had installed his own brother as the governor or administrator of part of his kingdom, Kāśī. In fact he came to be known as Kāśirājā.[216] Vidudabha had been selected as the commander of the army when he was the crown prince.[217]

In the Jātakas the sixteenth year in the life of a prince is considered a watermark. By that age a prince was considered perfect in all accomplishments. In Dummedha Jātaka we find the reference that by sixteen years of age he (Brahmadatta), had been well educated at Takṣaśilā had learned the three Vedas by heart and was versed in the eighteen branches of knowledge, and his (Brahmadatta) father made him a viceroy.[218] Similar sentiments are shown when we find the king anxious to make over the kingdom to prince Kuśa on the attainment of his sixteenth year. The king addresses the queen saying, "Lady, in making over the kingdom to your son, we would institute dramatic festivities and in our lifetime we would see him established on the throne. . . ."[219]

Reference to historical kings like Bimbisāra who had appointed crown Prince Ajātaśatru as governor of the province with Campā as its capital[220] and had placed another of his sons prince Abhaya in-charge of foiling Pradyota's machinations,[221] all go to emphasize the importance of the prince.

The Jaina texts mention Maṇiprabha, the great grandson of Pradyota ruling over Kauśāmbī, while his brother Avantisena ruling over Ujjain.[222]

No one can overlook the extraordinary services rendered by prince Aśoka as the viceroy of various provinces. Aśoka was appointed as viceroy at Ujjain in recognition of his services at Takṣaśilā.[223] In the Śuṅga period, the crown prince Agnimitra of Vidiśā fought against Vidarbha.[224] Similarly, the princes in the later historical periods were also appointed viceroys, commanders, regents, joint rulers and to other important political posts. Since this lies outside the scope of this work we shall not go into greater details.

Kauṭilya grades the *yuvarāja* or the crown prince as a member of the innermost circle of the *amātyas*.[225] The other members of this group were the *mantrī*, the *senāpati* and the *purohita*.

A Pāli canonical text refers to a short list of the *uparājā*'s qualifications as comprising physical beauty, parental affection and popularity [226]

Though an effort was made to keep the prince away from the extravaganza of court-life during his training perjod, usually by sending him away, more often than not, the princes were born and bred in an atmosphere of poetry, music and dance. Great festivities were held at the birth, the installation and the marriage of the prince.[227]

In general, princes married princesses of their own caste in one of the six forms authorised for a Kṣatriya.[228] In the heroic era the princes won their wives by emerging victorious from a tournament involving an archery contest. Like the king, the crown prince also had the right to possess a number of concubines but only the princess wed by him in solemn circumstances ranked as a legitimate wife.[229]

According to the Buddhist texts, princes usually married after their return from Takṣaśilā or completion of their studies and training. This meant the age of sixteen. Kauṭilya also supports this age. He declares that the (prince should observe) celibacy till the sixteenth year. Thereafter should follow the cutting of hair and marriage for him. However, the process of training should not end with marriage, it should continue.[230] In a Jātaka the king asks the queen if there was any king's daughter in India you would like, on his (the prince) bringing her here we will make her his queen consort. Sound him (the prince) as to what king's daughter he affects.[231]

Matrimonial rules allowing marriages between nephews and nieces[232] and even marriages between brothers and sisters[233] are celebrated in the Jātakas. The heir apparent had to be married before consecration oherwise he was not considered complete. We will recall that king Vijaya refused to be consecrated unless he had a wife also consecrated as queen.[234] Thus in Suruci Jātaka we have the reference. "Then she was made his queen consort, and they were both together consecrated by sprinkling."[235]

We also have stories of lovelorn Kṣatriya princes apprenticing themselves at various low jobs without any disgrace: the prince went to the king's potter and became his apprentice, went to a basket-maker who served the king, becoming his apprentice, and made a palm leaf fan for Pabhāvatī. On it was depicted a white umbrella (emblem of royalty). Became an apprentice to the king's gardener and made garlands, as an apprentice to the king's cook cut firewood, washed dishes and fetched water on his carrying pole.[236]

The epics also bear testimony to instances of princes participating in daring feats to win a princess. In fact the *svayaṁvara* system was based on this idea.

Often the reason for the princes to enter into various marriage alliances was to increase their strength. We find in the great Mahābhārata war the most powerful allies were the relations formed from marriage ties: Drupada of Pañcāla, the father-in-law of the Pāṇḍavas and his two sons Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Śikhaṇḍin; Virāṭa of Matsya, the father-in-law of prince Abhimanyu, Arjuna's son; Kṛṣṇa of Dvārakā, Arjuna's brother-in-law all supported the Pāṇḍavas. Similarly Jayadratha, Duryodhana's brother-in-law, was the prominent ally of the Kauravas.[237]

The ideal prince was one who had successfully gone through a progressive course of education; suppressed vices like greed, anger, lust, self-conceit excessive pride and excessive joy[238] and was devoted to the father and family.

However, not many princes could have lived up to this ideal because both the Jātakas and Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* warn the king against the subtle machinations of an ambitious prince.

In the Jātakas we find the prince thinking of four expedients to eliminate his father: administering poison to his father's food; taking his stand amongst his father's councillors at the time of the great levee and striking him a blow with his sword when off his guard; stabbing him at the top of the stairs in the royal closet; hiding beneath the couch in the king's chamber on the upper floor of the palace in order to kill him as soon as he entered the room.[239]

Probably because of early marriage sons came of age when the father was still young which naturally made them restless to occupy the throne. Their feelings have been aptly described in a Jātaka,

> My father is more like a brother. If I shall wait for his death, I shall be an old man before I succeed to the crown. What good will it do me to get the kingdom then? I will kill my father and make myself king.[240]

One such prince who could not wait till his father's natural death because by that time he would be a worn out old man decided to kill him. The prince's advisers pointed out the futility of open revolt and suggested other expedients: killing him (the king) near the bathing ghat; stabbing him at the foot of the stairs; killing him by a blow of a "spoon-shaped instrument" with its long handle poisoned.

The fathers also did not show any mercy to such sons because a prince is to be judged by his conduct alone. This son was put in chains and thrown into prison.[241] Kings do not feel any qualms in imprisoning and setting guard over the princes. In fact there are references to banishment of princes by fear-laden kings.[242]

That Kauṭilya does not have a very favourable view of the princes is obvious from the fact that he devotes an entire section on guarding against princes.[243] Kauṭilya quotes Bharadvāja saying that "princes like crabs have a notorious tendency of eating up their begetter." Like a piece of wood eaten by worms, the royal family with its princes undisciplined would break the moment it is attacked." Kauṭilya staunchly opposes the installation of an undisciplined prince going to the extent of suggesting that if the father of the prince was old or diseased he should beget a child from his wife by his mother's kinsman, a member of his own family, or even a virtuous neighbouring king.

He says, though, that princes lacking in filial affection "should be kept under guard in a definite place, but the father should be beneficently disposed towards the sons." Except in a calamity sovereignty passing on to the eldest son is praised.

Since a family oligarchy is difficult to conquer and remains on the earth for ever, without the danger of a calamity befalling the king the princes should be well trained and disciplined.

This brief account of the princes certainly proves that though the princes in polity have not attracted the necessary attention from scholars it certainly is a fascinating subject of vital importance.[244]

Royal Succession

Kingship[245] was generally hereditary and the order of succession was usually according to primogeniture as well as limited to the direct line. Nevertheless this accepted form was affected by factors such as the voice of the people, the preference of the reigning king, the ambition of other princes, ministers, assemblies, queens, feudatories, and military governors.[246] Another method of choosing the new king was by popular election. In certain cases kings were mere formally approved by the people. Hopkins expresses it well when he says,

> The kingdom either descended directly to the king's eldest son without question, or the new king was chosen by popular election. Such were the earliest conditions

in India, but the latter case is at all periods rare, and probably unknown in the epic age.[247]

Altekar also expresses the same view

that the formality of the election had become antiquated in the Vedic period . . . . There is thus no doubt that monarchy had become normally hereditary long before the later Vedic period.[248]

Dr U.N. Ghoshal is also in agreement with this theory of hereditary succession,

. . . we have concrete evidence of the general prevalence of hereditary monarchy as well as of the survival of dynastic govern-ments during the present, i.e., later Vedic period, but of elective monarchy there is hardly any trace. In the later Vedic period the hereditary principle is sufficiently established to make succession by primogeniture the normal rule.[249]

Evidence regarding the claim of the senior son may be gleaned from Vedic literature. The word *jyeṣṭha* in *Rgveda*[250] connotes the sense of an eldest brother than the eldest son. However, in later Vedic literature the sense of the eldest among sons becomes established.[251] P.V. Kane[252] observes that after considering the Vedic evidence it appears that in the Vedic period the rights of the eldest son were protected. The greeting *rājānām rājāpitaram*[253] (king the father of a king) alludes to the concept of hereditary rule obviously according to primogentiture. The epics also subscribe to the same view. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* King Daśaratha selects his eldest son Rāma as his successor. It is said that the Ikṣvākus had been adhering to the custom of primogeniture for fifty-five generations.[254] The war between the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas as related in the *Mahābhārata* is on the question of disputed succession.[255] Yudhiṣṭhira's right to the crown on account of his being the eldest son of Pāṇḍu was an unquestioned fact[256] but Duryodhana challenged this norm by the argument that the Kṣatriyas owe their superiority to physical might.[257] The right of the eldest son to inherit the kingdom was considered the normal practice by the kings of the Pūru dynasty.

Buddhist literature also corroborates this practice. The *Mahāvaṁsa* relates the story of thirteen kings following primogeniture.[258] The Jātakas are also replete with such examples.[259]

Kauṭilya upholds the same view[260] but warns against the installation of a wicked son even though he might be the only son.[261]

Megasthenes the Greek traveller also reports that the normal method of kingly succession was hereditary.[262] thereby showing that the practice was so widespread that even a visitor to the country had to record it. Manu observes, "the eldest alone may take the whole paternal estate, the others shall live under him just as they lived under their father."[263]

The practical problem faced by this norm was, on what basis was seniority to be decided, the seniority of the queen, or the seniority of the children. Manu tries to offer a solution by saying that the son born of the first wife is to be preferred, thus attaching importance to the seniority of the wives.[264] However, he himself contradicts this solution when he says, "Between sons born of wives equal (in caste) (and) without (any other) distinction no seniority in the right of the mother exists; seniority is declared (to be) according to birth."[265]

Regarding succession the *Rājadharmakaustubha*[266] offers interesting and informative observations basing its findings upon the *Kālikāpurāṇa* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*: The natural son irrespective of his being elder or younger in age is to be preferred to the eleven types of subsidiary sons; the elder son of a junior queen of the same caste is to be preferred to the younger one born of the senior queen; the son of the senior queen receives priority in succession if the two sons are born simultaneously to two queens of the same caste; if twins are born of a senior queen, the first born is given priority. All this gives us a glimpse of the intricate problems faced even when primogeniture was the accepted norm. Kingship is found to be hereditary even in the Vedic period. We have the story of the Śṛñjaya king Duṣṭaritu Pauṁsāyana who is supposed to have succeeded to a kingdom inherited through ten generations (*daśapurusamrājya*).[267] In the same manner the crown of the Tṛtsus had passed from father to son for four generations and for a still longer period among the Purus.[268] The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*[269] records that at the time of coronation the new ruler was designated king and also the son of the king. Thus it appears that kingship was usually confined to a particular family. However, N.C. Bandopadhyaya[270] feels that descent from father to son according to laws of seniority had not become the general principle in the early period.

We also find that though the people had lost the right of determining the next occupant of the throne, they still retained as exemplified by historical legends, limited and in irregular form the power of modifying the choice determined by the aristocracy.

Preservation of the direct line of inheritance was of the greatest

importance. In the Jātaka[271] the king says, "My sons you may not dwell in this town so go elsewhere and when I die you shall return and take the kingdom which belongs to our family." The common mass of citizens also appear to be most concerned about the preservation and perpetuation of the royal line. To them failure of an heir was a national misfortune. That is the reason probably why even promiscuous relations is suggested for begetting an heir: "Never a son nor daughter she had of him." Then all the townsfolk gathered together in the palace courtyard with upbraidings. "What is it?" the king asked. "Fault we have no other to find," said they, "but this that you have no son to keep up your line. . . ." "Choose a company of women my lord. Some worthy wife will bring you a son." On the insistence of the townsfolk, the queen even took the eight sabbath vows or the eight *śīlāni* against taking life, theft, impurity, lying, consuming intoxicating liquors eating at forbidden hours, indulging in worldly amusement, unguents and wearing ornaments,[272] in the hope of begetting an heir. All this highlights the importance attached to the question of avoiding the extinction of any dynasty at any cost. The crown may even be offered to a foreigner when a dynasty was threatened with extinction for lack of an heir.[273] If a king was survived by his daughter and his nephew, the nephew usually succeeded him thus continuing the dynasty even though the direct line was broken.[274]

In the epics we get examples of the common people exhibiting their unchallenged right of protesting against any choice of king whom they considered unworthy of discharging his duties and responsibilities. Though often the people did not gain their point it is instructive to note, as E.W. Hopkins[275] points out, the manner in which the people loose. In each case the monarch had to justify his choice never by force, but by aguments addressed in a respectful manner to the protests of the people. Pratīpa and Yayāti both installed their younger sons Śāntanu and Pūru respectively as kings on the plea that Śāntanu's elder brother Devāpi was suffering from leprosy and Pūru's elder brothers had refused to obey their father's order to exchange their youth with their father's old age.[276] Altekar points out that the people were satisfied with these explanations and that the people's protests should not be regarded as their right to select the king but that they had accepted primogeniture as the accepted norm and so questioned any deviation.[277] Pāṇḍu, the younger son, also inherited the kingdom because his elder brother Dhṛtarāṣṭra was blind "for the gods do not approve of a defective king."[278] People's involvement is often traced

in the installation of Rāma.[279] However, here too, Altekar points out that Daśaratha had invited important feudatories and neighbouring monarchs and not the notable citizens of his realm. Besides these invitees merely approved of Rāma's choice as a formality they had no voice when Rāma was banished.[280]

The Jātakas also agree to the system of primogeniture. After the obsequies of a departed king were performed the ministers assembled together to choose the successor which was more or less a formal matter. If there was more than one son the mantle usually fell upon the eldest son.[281] Like the epics, the Jātaka also provides us with references of where this norm is transgressed. We find a king on his deathbed instructing his courtiers that everyone of his hundred sons had an equal right to succession but that the best of them should be elected by the ministers exercising their own judgement.[282]

Though the norm of primogeniture was sometimes flouted, hereditary kingship appears to have been the accepted practice. The custom of hereditary rule was supposed to guarantee good government. The genealogy of the Ikṣvāku family proves that for several generations both before and after the reign of Rāma, the crown was inherited hereditarily. In the event of an undisputed succession if the crown prince was a minor at the time of the king's death the kingdom was usually administered by a regent as we find in the *Mahābhārata*.[283] Here we find that the kingdom is kept by the elder brother of the boy prince. The boy prince is said to have nominal sovereignty and the dowager queen's authority is supposed to be respected.[284]

On the king's death, the kingdom was kept for the minor prince by an older relative who governed it as if he were king according to epic practice.[285] In the above example, Bhīṣma is the elder brother of the still *bāla,* Vicitra Vīrya. This may be looked upon as fratrilineal succession but is an inconclusive example because Bhīṣma had promised never to become king but to always keep the welfare of the kingdom as his foremost responsibility.[286]

A more plausible example of fratrilineal succession is when Tārā laments at the death of her husband Vālī:

> I would rather die with this hero. . . . I cannot myself govern this kingdom nor can I confer it upon Aṅgada (her son) such duty devolves upon his uncle Sugrīva now.[287]

Here a glimpse into the role of marriage in succession would be apt.

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* categorically states that the queen, inasmuch as she is his wife is half of himself. Therefore as long as he does not find a wife, so long he is not born, so long he is not complete.[288] The Purāṇas though reflecting conditions of a later age, also insist that "the coronation ceremony of king should be held after a lapse of a complete year from the time of accession and the king should select his astrologer, the royal priest, his queen who would be his wedded wife and his ministers. . . ."[289]

Buddhist literature also appears to support this system. We find King Vijaya refuses to be consecrated as king unless he has a wife also consecrated as queen.[290]

In Kuśa Jātaka[291] when the prince Kuśa was sixteen, the king anxious to make over the kingdom, addressed the queen thus: "If there is any king's daughter in India you would like, on his bringing her here, we will make her his queen consort. . . ." The ministers went to other countries and said, "Our king has a son the bold prince Kuśa; the king is anxious to make over his kingdom to him and has sent us to ask you to give your daughter Pabhāvatī in marriage and to accept as a present this golden figure."[292]

Hocart[293] is also of the opinion that marriage is constantly associated with consecration.

All these evidences show the necessity of marriage to a king ascending the throne but there is a dearth of material to be absolutely certain.

The queens, especially the Mahiṣī, had their share of influencing the choice of the successor. The most blatant example of this is the way Kaikeyī manages to manipulate the throne for her son, Bharata. The queen Sachi Paulomi took recourse to sorcery to retain the highest place in her husband's grace, to counteract the influence of co-wives and finally to ensure that her son would be master one day.[294] The Jātakas[295] also refer to intriguing queens of the harem who could even go to the extent of killing the king.

We find in the *Arthaśāstra* references in detail to the problem of security of the king from the queens.[296] These queens probably plotted and conspired either to secure the throne for their sons or for persons of their liking. An example of such intrigue is the infidelity of Kālāśoka's wife. Her paramour who was of base origin murdered the king and ascended the throne.[297] The ministers also on occasion played very important roles as selectors of rulers or as rulers themselves.

The ministers tried their best to maintain the supremacy of their patrons.

They even stooped to underhand dealings to cheat rightful successors. One such minister was Aśmasārin of Śāntanu. He tactfully arranged that Devāpi's prestige may get eroded in the eyes of the Brāhmaṇas by ensuring that ascetics known for their anti-Vedic theology visited Devāpi.[298]

Loyal ministers often arranged for the restoration of the kingdom to their king. We find a reference to the restoration of king Duṣṭaritu Pauṁsāyana by Revottaras Pāṭava Chakra Sthapati. Both of them had been expelled by the Śṛñjayas. It is mentioned that Revottaras Pāṭava Chakra Sthapati in his task of restoration faced staunch opposition from the Kuru Prince Bālhika Prātipiya but succeeded in his effort. It may be concluded that he was most likely a minister.[299]

Exactly the opposite behaviour can also be noted among ministers, where they work against their king. Kāśī's minister invited the king of Kosala to attack the former.[300]

Kauṭilya observes that in the absence of a prince of good character the minister may place before himself a wicked prince or princess or the pregnant queen and ask other ministers. For guidance of action, after taking them into confidence beforehand. The ministers will then agree that he should be leader since the king "is merely a flag"[301] in such a case.

Buddhist literature bears testimony to a number of eraser of succession by ministerial approval or restricted selection. We find reference to a statement by a king on his deathbed that everyone of his hundred sons had an equal right to succession but that the best of them only should be elected by the ministers exercising their own judgement in the matter.[302] This also establishes that primogeniture or the succession of the eldest was not an inviolable rule. In another Jātaka we find the courtiers testing a seven year old prince to decide whether or not they would make him king.[303] The *Divyāvadāna* alludes to Susīma and Vigātaśoka as two brothers of Aśoka the great. Of them Susīma probably the Sumana of the Ceylonese chronicles, being the eldest of them.[304] It is recorded that the dying King Bindusāra wanted to appoint Susīma as king but his ministers placed Aśoka on the throne.[305] The same source also suggests that Aśoka's ministers installed his grandson Samprati on the throne and deposed Aśoka because of his excessive generosity and waste of the treasury.[306] However, the authenticity of this story is in doubt. The intrigues of a Brāhmaṇa minister Vāsudeva who engaged a slave girl to approch the last king of the Śuṅga dynasty Devabhūti or Devabhūmi as his queen and murder him is also referred to.[307] Besides these, innumerable examples can be found of

ministerial influence in the selection of the future king during the period, beyond the scope of this work.

In an age when war-like qualities were held in the highest esteem and conquests of kingdoms were the rule of the day it is no wonder that army commanders influenced succession as well. We find Dīgha Cārāyana, the commander of king Prasenajit, raising Vidudabha to the throne in Prasenajit's absence.[308] The last Maurya king Bṛhadratha was assassinated by his army commander Puṣyamitra Śuṅga who occupied the throne and laid the foundation of the Śuṅga dynasty.[309]

Though primogeniture was the accepted norm, the other princes did not always submit tamely. History also bears testimony to many princes even imprisoning or murdering their fathers for the sake of the crown.

It appears that Devāpi was probably pressurised by circumstances to abdicate and retire to the forest when Śāntanu declared himself king by overruling the claims of his elder brother, Devāpi.[310] In the same manner the ambitious prince Sudāsa became king of the Bharatas when his elder brother, Pratardana was killed in a fraternal struggle.[311] Another famous fratricidal struggle is the struggle between Kṣatavarma and Sātyaki which led to the ultimate collapse of the Yādavas.[312]

Though the accession of Prince Ajātaśatru to the throne of Magadha and of prince Vidudabha or Vidūratha to the kingdom of Kosala are cited as examples of hereditary succession we cannot overlook the stigma of patricide attached to both the cases. In fact a Ceylonese chronicle holds that all the kings in the line of Ajātaśatru to Nāgadāsaka were parricides. Hence the people in disgust raised Amāya Śiśunāga to the throne.[313] Another such prince was Kaṁsa who imprisoned his father and became king.[314] Kauṭilya discusses in detail the dangers faced by a ruling king from impatient, disaffected, unsatisfied and ambitious princes. He specifically states, that a king protects the kingdom (only) when (he is himself) protected from persons near him and from enemies, first from his wives and sons.[315] Kauṭilya quotes as we have seen the opinion of Bharadvāja, according to which princes like crabs have a notorious tendency of eating their begetter.[316]

The Jātakas also furnish us with details about impatient princes contemplating parricide.[317] Thus we see that as in the Vedic, in the post-Vedic period as well, India was known for hereditary kingship and the crown generally passed from father to son, usually to the eldest son. Since the eldest son was generally appointed the viceroy he remained

in close contact with the different departments of administration and warfare. This naturally paved the way for assuming the royal duties on his father's death. However, we must remember that this accepted formula of hereditary succession was often circumscribed by various factors discussed.

Dealing with the question of people's right to elect and ratify there is a sharp difference of opinion amongst various scholars regarding the nature of kingship. Zimmer says that there is difinite evidence that in some states kings were elected by the people. This view is supported by Weber and Bloomfield, but opposed by Geldner who argues that kings were accepted by subjects not chosen by them. Macdonell observes that though Geldner's view is more probable it does not exclude the hypothesis that "monarchy was sometimes elective"[318]

However, several references supporting election can be traced in Vedic literature. The *Ṛgveda* mentions the people (*viś*) electing a king.[319] It may be pointed out here that probably the whole populace did not take part in such elections. The *Atharvaveda* also observes that the king to be coronated may be elected by the people.[320] References like, "unto thee hath come the kingdom; step forward with majesty as lord of the people, sole ruler. . . ."

"Thee let the people choose unto kingship,"[321] point to the prevalence of election as a system of choosing a king.

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* recounts an interesting anecdote. The gods, being defeated by the *asuras* repeatedly, concluded that the absence of a king was the cause of the defeats. Therefore they unanimously elected Soma as their king.[322] This, however, should not be regarded as conclusive proof of the origin of kingship by election for naturally the first king had to be elected. It has been suggested that instead of the entire population, kings were elected by charioteers and the village chiefs, as by and large they represented the military and civil section of the people. This is based on the information gathered from *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and *Atharvaveda*.[323]

Popular election is probably expressed in this passage of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,*

> Thou (the king and Indra) art Brāhmaṇa! Thou art Indra, mighty through the people (or he whose strength is the people, i.e., the Maruts in the case of Indra, and the subjects or peasantry in that of the king).[324]

It is also further stated that he alone becomes a ruler whose leadership is accepted by other kings.[325]

The passages in the *Atharvaveda* where prayers are offered the rivals may be inferior—"Increase, O Indra this Kṣatriya, for me make thou this man sole chief of the clans (*viś*), unman (*mis-akshi*) all his enemies; make them subjects to him in the contest pre-eminence;"[326] or charms used to bring the voters to one side: "They that are king's king makers, that are charioteers and troop-leaders (*grāmaṇyāḥ*) subjects to me do thou o *parṇa* make all people round about"[327]—probably show the prevalence of a system of election.

The Sūtra writers, however, seem to be quite unaware of the elective system because there is hardly any reference to the system in their works.

The epics provide us with certain oblique references to the election procedure but there is no conclusive proof.

In the *Rāmāyaṇa,* King Daśaratha calls upon the chief persons of the cities and villages, Brāhmaṇas, representatives of the military and a number of subordinate princes when he decides to consecrate Rāma,[328] and leaves the final decision to this assembly.

There is also reference to king makers' or *rājakartāraḥ*[329] assembling to select a king after Daśaratha's death.

These references are interpreted differently by different historians: Dr. Majumdar finds in them conclusive proof of the constitutional right of the people,[330] Altekar[331] on the other hand feels that Daśaratha's summoning of an assembly was merely a formality because the same assembly had no voice in preventing the banishment of Rāma to the forest. He further points out that the *rājakartāraḥ* refer to the Brāhmaṇas who were entrusted with the duty of offering the coronation ablutions to the king.

The people's interference in the accession of Devāpi or Puru in the *Mahābhārata* is also a controversial issue. According to some,[332] the people just wanted to know why the accepted norm had been overridden, while others[333] feel they corroborate people's authority in selecting the king.

Probably the concept of election is represented in the manner Kuru became king. "This Kuru all the people elected (sic) to the kingship saying 'he is a virtuous man'."[334] People are again seen ratifying the succession of the infant son of their king. "All the people inhabiting the city collected together and this boy, the former king's son, they made king (sic) and this Janmejaya whom the people had declared king (sic) governed the kingdom with his councillors and priest."[335] Since this was a case of hereditary kingship there should have been no necessity for ratification by people. Thus this interesting incident, probably, again

shows the people's authority. Therefore it appears that the supreme Kṣatriya was still not independent of the veto power of the people. Hopkins[336] rightly observes, "The people's constitution was the tradition of their race."

In spite of these apparent allusions to election it is strange that there is no reference to the voting procedure in Hindu literature. If we assume that the people had proper voting rights then logically we should find the people mentioned before the king in the seven *aṅgas* of the state but this is not the case. Though we find reference to the political assembly of nobles and priests there is no concrete evidence or guidelines of the administrative aspect of the group. Considering the general position of the women in that age, we can probably safely conclude that women could not have exercised voting rights, therefore certainly universal female franchise did not exist then.[337]

When we turn to Buddhist sources to find a conclusive answer to this vexing question of election we get certain interesting pieces of information.

The Pañcaguru Jātaka[338] and Telapatta Jātaka[339] record that the Bodhisattva who was a complete stranger was elected to the throne by the people.

It is mentioned that on the death of an anonymous king of Gandhāra a prince from Magadha was once placed on the throne by the joint will of the citizens and the courtiers of Takṣaśilā.[340] Another Jātaka[341] speaks of a prince who was probably the prince of Magadha on whom the people conferred the kingdom. Often kings renounced their throne in their old age and retired to the forest. One such king ordered his people to elect a successor.[342]

In contrast to this people's involvement we have an interesting exception where the claim of the legal son was overruled and the king's spiritual and temporal adviser was nominated king by the ministers, and the people had no say in the matter.[343] The influence of ministers in the election procedure is highlighted here. Other Jātakas make references to corroborate this.[344]

The *Dīghanikāya* bears testimony to the people selecting the most handsome and capable man to be the king. This first king was called Mahā Sammata or "chosen by the whole people."[345]

Buddhist literature alludes to the knowledge of voting procedure in which three methods are enumerated: the secret ballot, whispering in the ear or an open vote. However, there were limitations to this system,

meaning, if the results were not in accordance with Dhamma the vote could be rejected three times.[346] Sometimes different candidates were supported by different individuals or groups. It may be presumed that the success of a candidate depended upon the "application of the system of voting by means of which a final decision of the House was obtained, bringing the debate to a conclusion."[347]

Thus we see that various evidences are available about the system of succession and each evidence can be subjectively interpreted. However, of one thing we can almost be certain of that the king did not possess, at least in theory, discretionary powers. The modern concept of sovereignty that it is supreme, unrestrained by law, did not exist in ancient India. India never gave its rulers and kings of people the despotic power to overrule *dharma*. The correct application of the law to all the people, as was their right, was the main theme around which grew the different concepts of succession.

Duties and Responsibilities

The whole glory of the Kṣatriya caste is exhibited in terms that denote the sovereign *rājan, mahīpati, īśvara, pṛthvīpati, pārthivanṛpati, narādhipa, narendranṛpa, svāmī, aiśvarya ādhipatya* or in Pāli, *ādipacca* and *oggaha* of the early Jaina texts.[348] The king's ruling power becomes obvious from the above mentioned titles for the king. The king is the Kṣatriya par excellence. The king's existence is sufficient unto himself, but much more as father of his people.[349]

The essence of the state was the person of the king. The king's duties were so varied and versatile that the disastrous consequences of a kingless state is lyrically described in the *Rāmāyaṇa*, "The rain ceased to fall and no longer made the earth fertile, the son no longer honoured his father, nor the wife her husband, men no longer gathered together in public meetings, the rich were no longer protected against theft, peasants kept their doors bolted and the whole country resembled a river without water, a forest without greenery, a flock of sheep without a shepherd.[350]

Both religious and secular literatures provide us with an exhaustive list of the obligations and duties of the king. Like any other Kṣatriya the first and foremost duty of the king was to offer protection. The king should never retreat in battle. Any armed aggression had to be met in a bold manner. The people covet security and peace and the king promises to offer it to

the best of his ability. There is no higher duty for men of the military caste than to risk their lives in battle. . . . A king having conquered the capital of his foe should invest there a prince of the royal family of that country with royal dignity. Let him not extirpate the royal race.[351] The king is not only to have regard for his own people but also show consideration to those whom he has conquered.[352] According to Manu, he should honour their gods and the just Brāhmaṇas, declare general amnesty for all and make gentle proclamations. Finally he should install someone of his own race over the conquered people.[353]

He should protect equally the life of his subjects, their property and traditional customs. The king should protect property by punishing the thief.[354] A ruler could proclaim diverse punishments, e.g., flogging him with whips, with canes, with cudgels, cutting of his hand, his foot, his ear and nose and torturing him.[355] The king must let his rod fall alike on friend or foe. The king himself may not be a witness. In the Epic period the punishment could be according to the typical death-giving power of royalty or conversely, of its power of pardon,[356] so great was the responsibility of protecting property that it was incumbent on the king to restore to a subject the stolen wealth at any cost.[357] In time of war he had to keep them safe from harm. He was responsible for the people's sins in the next world if he failed in these duties after having exacted taxes.[358] The king was thus liable to a supernatural penalty if he failed to keep his part of the bargain. The price for security was tax which was low during peace time but increased during an emergency like war. Protecting the people gives the king a sixth of the realm's virtue. Protecting a Brāhmaṇa gives him a sixth of the Brāhmaṇa's virtue and in view of the protection he receives half the treasure one finds.[359] The term alertness probably best describes the faculty prized in a king. "He should be ready for the future, firm in the present, and understand what still remains (to be done) from the past." Thus he will be able to protect his Aryan and un-Aryan subjects.[360]

Above all the king should desire to please all his people by applying the sacred law and tradition and was obligated to respect and encourage the various customs and rules of family, caste and association, if they were consistent with the *dhārmic* code and the preservation of order. The king was to regard all men with impartiality and punish any man, whatever his caste,[361] if he did not fulfil his duty. However, later, the Brāhmanas came to be excluded from the purview of punishment.[362] The Sūtra texts also lay down that the king should protect all creative beings and inflict lawful

punishment.[363] The noble duty of the king was to execute the one deserving execution, to fine one the deserving to be fined and to banish the one deserving to be banished.[364]

All this brings us to the most overt expression of the king's ruling authority, technically called *daṇḍa*.[365] The vices and selfishness that characterise men help to glorify coercion or *daṇḍa*. Man cannot live apart from the protection *daṇḍa* provides.

> When the law of punishment is kept in abeyance, it gives rise to the disorder implied in the proverb of the fishes; for in the absence of a magistrate, the strong will swallow the weak; but under his protection the weak resist the strong.[366]

Kauṭilya as we have seen, further justifies the institution of *daṇḍa* by emphasizing that its (the rod wielded by the king) administration constitutes the science of politics having for its purpose the acquisition of (things) not possessed, the preservation of (things) possessed, the augmentation of (things) preserved the bestowal of (things) augmented on a worthy recipient.[367] On it is dependent the orderly maintenance of worldly life.[368] This authority of the king has been well summed by Ihering as

> A legal rule without coercion is fire that does not burn, a light that does not shine.[369]

This *daṇḍa* should be wielded in accordance with custom and sacred law. The king had Dhamma as his king. A righteous king was Dhamma itself.[370] But the ruler may be forced to depart from the law in order to preserve it. This brings us to the question of the inherent sin of the Kṣatriya *dharma*. The king may be duty bound to perform acts that are in themselves evil to preserve order, e.g., fight a war like the Kurukṣetra war to establish the right. In such a war many innocent lives are destroyed but then that is the necessary evil entwined with preserving the sacred *dharma*.

Thus the entire concept of *daṇḍa* and *rājadharma* rest on the broad concept of virtue and stability leading to the ultimate happiness of the people. Even the Buddhist texts reflect the same view: a king is actually one who wins over his people and gives them happiness giving grief to his opponents.[371] The king is born to give happiness, the happiness of his subjects is his main concern.

These duties are summed-up lyrically in a Buddhist text.[372] In it Vessāntara says: "Sire a king ought to rule his kingdom righteously, abiding in the three truths" and describing a king's duty he spoke these stanzas:

First of all should a king put away all falsehood and anger and scorn.
Let him do what a king has to do, or else to his vow be forsworn.
By passion and sin led astray should he err in the past. It is plain.
He will live to repent of the deed and will learn not to do it again.
When a prince in his rule groweth slack, untrue to his name and fame should his wealth all at once disappear, of that prince it is counted as shame.
It was that Good Fortune and Luck when I asked, made reply unto me,
'In a man energetic and bold we delight, if from jealousy free.'
Ill luck ever wrecking good fortune delighteth in men of ill deeds.
The hard-hearted creatures in whom a spirit of jealously breeds.
To all, O great king, be a friend, so that all may thy safety insure,
Ill luck put away, but to luck that is good be a dwelling secure.
The man that is lucky and bold, O thou that O'er Kāśī dost reign,
His foes will destroy root and branch, and to greatness, will surely attain.
Great Sakka all courage in man ever watches with vigilant eyes.
For courage as virtue he holds and in it true goodness espies.
Gandharvas, gods, angels and men, one and all emulate such a king.
And spirits appearing stand by, of his zeal and his vigour to sing.
Be zealous to do what is right, nor however reviled, yield to sin,
Be earnest in efforts for good—no sluggard can bliss ever win.
Herein is the text of thy duty, to teach thee the way thou shouldst go:
This enough to win bliss for a friend or to work grievous ill for a foe.
Be sure that thou never as king thy people mislead to their cost
Lest all men and women alike in an ocean of trouble be lost.[373]

By the fourth century BC there had been a notable increase in the welfare functions of the king. The king's aim was to be to seek first his realm's happiness and then his own. All this is well summed up in the remark, "the tears of them that weep for thy wrong ruling shall slay thee and thy herds . . . but where the tear of misery is turned into joy, there is a king's duty nobly done."[374]

The king was obliged to protect the family by punishing adulterers, promoting education, encouraging religion by showing generosity and tolerance towards all religious orders, assuring the welfare of widows and orphans, developing charitable institutions, maintaining the purity of the caste and ensuring agricultural and commercial development.

One of the most important duties of the king was the maintenance of caste. Among the ancient law-givers Manu lays special emphasis on this duty. According to him the kingdom would prosper only so long as the

purity of the castes is maintained otherwise it will perish together with its inhabitants.[375] A person who transgressed his *varṇa* was to be punished by the king.[376]

The care of the Brāhmaṇa was one of the foremost duties of the king. "In his realm no Brāhmaṇa should suffer hunger, sickness cold or heat be it through want or intentionally."[377] The king is enjoined "not to levy any tax upon the Brāhmaṇas. For they pay taxes in the shape of their pious acts."[378] The culmination of this concept of "preserving" the Brāhmaṇas is that a king who is slain in attempting to recover the property of Brāhmaṇa "performs a sacrifice where his body takes the place of the sacrificial post and at which an unlimited fee is given."[379] Among the highest duties of the king recorded is obedience to Brāhmaṇas.[380] This demands the king's servile obedience towards the Brāhmaṇas.

However, E.W. Hopkins refers to punishment of priests. The punishment should be graded according to the social standing. "The greater the reverence they enjoyed before they sinned, the greater should be their punishment."[381]

The king was not only the living symbol of the state's powers but also the controller of the weather and the soil's abundance. A "weather maker" likened to the sun, he had to submit himself to a strict schedule so that the regularity of the cosmic order was maintained. Similarly, to make arable land fertile the king was obliged to supervise in spring the first movements of the plough throughout his domain. He actually participated by gripping the plough and guiding the team with a gold handled goad. This marked the first furrows of the future harvests and this ceremonial breaking of the soil was imitated by the court officials and agricultural workers.[382] Since the era we are dealing with was the time when the warlike nomadic Aryans were settling as agricultural landowners there are references to the *dāsa karmakāras* (slaves and labourers) in the fields of the *rājakulas* (the land-owning Kṣatriya clans).[383] Therefore in the popular mind there was an intimate relationship between the king and agriculture. Poor crops were blamed upon the sovereign's injustice.[384] The king was held responsible for collective prosperity or degradation.

A survey of the king's day-to-day activity would help to ascertain his duties and obligations in more detail. The virtues demanded of a king were justness, goodness and impartiality. When the king was righteous those who surrounded him were also righteous, so was the belief. When the king is active the servants become active following his example. If he

is remiss, they too become remiss along with him and they consume his works. Moreover, he is over reached by enemies. Therefore he should himself be (energetically) active. He should divide the day into eight parts as also the night by means of *nalikas* or by means of the shadow (of the gnomon).[385]

Like all Indians, he rose long before sunrise. Every morning at a precise hour the palace orchestra would wake the king. Kauṭilya recommends that the first eight parts of the day should be spent in listening to the measures taken for defence and accounts of income and expenditure. Megasthenes records that the royal chaplain greeted him first thing in the moning.

During the second part the king should look into the affairs of the citizens and the country people.

He should attend to his personal needs like having a bath, making preliminary toilet, having his meals and devoting time to study during the third division of time.

The fourth part was reserved for receiving revenue and assigning tasks to heads of departments.

The king next consulted his council of ministers by sending letters and they would advise him. His councillors should be regenerate men, wise, aristocratic, skilled in determining what was right and useful. His general officers should be of hereditary office and superior to deceit. The king should acquaint himself with secret information brought in by spies. During the sixth part he should engage in recreation at his pleasure or hold consultation.

The inspection and reviewing of elephants, horses, chariots and troops were done in the seventh division of the day.

The king deliberated with the commander-in-chief on military plans during the next part of the day.

With the ninth part the day would come to an end and the king worshipped the twilight then.

Similarly nights were also divided into eight parts. The first part was devoted to interviewing secret agents.

During the second, he should take a bath, have his meals and engage in study.

He should go to bed to the strains of musical instruments in the third and sleep through the fourth and fifth parts.

As already mentioned, he should awaken to the sounds of musical

instruments. These early hours consisted of the sixth part. On awakening, he should ponder over the teachings of the science (of politics) as well as over the work to be done.

During the seventh the king should sit in consultation (with councillors) and despatch secret agents.

During the eighth part he should receive blessings from priests, preceptors and chaplain and meet his physician, with the cook and the astrologer.

Finally after going round a cow with her calf and a bull (probably a sign of good omen, according to us) he should proceed to the assembly hall.

The king could also divide the day and night into (different) parts in conformity with his capacity and carry out his tasks.

At the assembly hall unrestricted audience was given to all those who wished to see him because only then would he be able to judge correctly and do what was to be done. This would protect him from insurrection by the subjects and also subjugation by the enemy.

Therefore he gave his undivided attention a wide variety of subjects: affairs of temple deities, hermitages, heretics, Brāhmaṇas learned in the Vedas, cattle, holy places, minors, the aged, the sick, the distressed and the helpless and women. The king would decide the precedence of the subject, on the importance of the matter, or its urgency.

The king was warned against postponing any urgent matter, on the ground, that the settlement of such a matter became difficult, at times impossible.

He had to look into the affairs of persons learned in the Vedas and of ascetics, after going to the fire sanctuary and in the company of his chaplain and preceptor after rising from his seat and saluting this suitors.

Also, the affairs of ascetics and of persons versed in the practice of magic should be decided in consultation with persons learned in the three Vedas and never alone, for fear they might be roused to anger.

Thus for the king, the (sacrificial) vow is activity, the sacrifice the administration of affairs, the sacrificial fee is impartiality of behaviour and the sacrificial initiation the coronation.[386]

The king should consult his ministers both individually and collectively. These consultations should take place in the well encircled Hall of Council, or if he chose, any other secret place such as a wood, hill or housetop. From such meetings were excluded any person or talking

birds that might betray the secrets. Night consultations were to be avoided by the king and before each meeting he had to remind the ministers of the sins of those that betray the council.[387]

Every king had to be familiar with his own and his neighbour's affairs. A technical enumeration of these by the teachers of polity amounted to seventy-two subjects for consideration.[388]

Similar concepts of the busy schedule of the king are found in the *Manusmṛti* and the *Mahābhārata* as well.[389] These are supplemented by statements, like: the duties of the king are so strenuous he is included among five persons who sleep little at night.[390] Megasthenes refers to the king leaving the palace for the purpose of judging cases. He then remains in court for the whole day without allowing the business to be interrupted. He even has his body rubbed with cylinders of wood by four attendants and continues listening to the proceedings of the case.[391]

Since a king had to lead such an active and strenuous life he naturally had to be both physically and mentally fit.

For this the king was advised to cast off the vices and learn to control himself. He had to overcome love and wrath and subdue his passions.[392] Eight virtues caused a man to shine: wisdom, good family, self-restraint, knowledge of revelation, courage, not talking too much, generosity, thankfulness.The same passage emphasizes that when a king does good to a man, this virtue outshines all other virtues.[393]

The four sins particularly reprehensible in a king are women, dice, hunting and drinking.[394] An ideal king should not be given to riot and waste, from gambling and drunkenness be free.[395]

Kauṭilya reflects similar views when he lays down that a king should avoid another man's wife or property, as well as doing injury to others, also (avoid) sleepiness, capriciousness, falsehood, wearing an extravagant dress, association with harmful persons and any transaction associated with unrighteousness or harm.[396]

However, the *Arthaśāstra* does not set the ideal of asceticism for a king. The king is enjoined upon to enjoy sensual pleasures without contravening his spiritual good and material well-being. The king should not deprive himself of pleasure. He should devote himself equally to the three goals of life (spiritual good, material well-being and sensual pleasures) as they are intimately bound with each other and excessive indulgence in any one is bound to cause harm to itself as well as to the other two.[397]

Thus we see that the king's life was certainly not a bed of roses. A close examination reveals that there was an endless complexity of subjects to which he had to pay attention. The king's schedule included all possible combination of all conceivable military, judicial, civil and domestic affairs. For handling such a wide variety of subjects the king had to, by eliminating the group of six vices, acquire control over his senses, cultivate his intellect by association with elders, keep a watchful eye by means of spies, bring about security and well-being by energetic activity, maintain the observance of their special duties (by the subjects) by carrying out (his own), acquire discipline by (receiving) instruction in the sciences, attain popularity by association with what is of material advantange, and maintain (proper) behaviour by (doing) what is beneficial.[398]

Here a brief survey of the king's prerogatives is necessary to complete the total picture of Kṣatriya eminence. The body of royal prerogatives are dealt by both the Brāhmaṇa canonists and the technical works on polity. The Brāhmaṇical texts deal with them mainly in terms of his social status as well as security. The secular writers are concerned more with the protection of his authority, his property and his dignity.

The list of prerogatives given in the Dharmasūtras consist of, among other things: The king's right to the most coveted social distinctions of the time, e.g., he was entitled not only to the *arghya* or guest offering, but to the higher honour of *madhuparka* or honey mixture while visiting a householder; the king was included in the list of those for whom right of way had to be given, however, next only to the Brāhmaṇa.

The king and the Brāhmaṇa were considered above ceremonial impurity. The kings became pure immediately after committing a death-causing act. It was believed that death at a king's hand releases the relatives of the dead at once from impurity. On the death of a king Vedic study had to be interrupted and universal impurity was declared. The householder was advised not to have his meals even when the king was in distress.

The king's person, family honour and authority were to be protected at any cost. The murderer of a king was to be cast of even if he be one's father and expiation entailed a severe penance extending over twelve years. Connection with the king's wife was considered as heinous as violating the preceptor's bed. The later Smṛti literature provides more details about this prerogative.

In secular literature it is again the *Arthaśāstra* that gives us details about the prerogatives.

Kauṭilya while dealing with the civil law,[399] discusses penalties "for expressing hatred of the king, for counterfeiting the king's edicts or seal and making gifts more than the king out of pride." A graded scale of penalties ending with death, according to the status of the criminal, is to be awarded for counterfeiting the king's edict or seal; the penalty of mutilation or alternatively a heavy fine is to be inflicted for prophesying the king's misfortune, for tampering with the royal edict or even for riding the king's mount or conveyance: death with torture is prescribed for designing to seize the throne, for violating the sanctity of the king's *zenāna*, for instigating the foresters and the king's enemies, and for causing disaffection in the rural and urban areas as well as among the king's troops; the penalty of impalement is laid down for injuring or stealing the king's elephants, horses and chariots, while mutilation is the punishment for reviling the king.[400] All this can be summed up under the heading of protection of the king's person as well as authority and dignity.

About the protection of government revenue and of the king's property in general, Kauṭilya's laws are as drastic as the above.

A scale of penalties is laid down for the officer causing loss of revenue from eight specified causes, as well as for office clerks guilty of various forms of embezzlement.[401] As already mentioned impalement is prescribed for injuring or stealing king's horses, elephants or chariots.[402]

Penalty of death with or without torture is the punishment for theft from the state granaries as well as state factories manufacturing various mineral substances, *ratnas* and agricultural products (*saras*). Another list of severe penalties accompanies the above punishments for theft from state shops and stores in the government areas or *rājā parigraha*. A list of less severe penalties is ordained for theft in the day time from threshing floors and fields as well as residences and shops belonging to the outer areas (*bāhya*).[403]

Kauṭilya states a double scale of fines for cutting off the leaves, branches and trunks of trees marked with the royal sign, or standing in the king's garden, as compared to other tress.[404]

In the Buddhist canons also stories are preserved of treason and punishment. According to them, death with torture was the normal penalty not only for deserters from military service, but also for Buddhist monks abetting their act. Another story indicates the flexibility

of the law prescribing the penalty of death for attempting the king's assassination.[405]

Now the question arises did all the kings live up to the high standard set for them and enjoy the prerogatives prescribed for them unhindered? This is one of the most vexing questions that the historians have faced. Certain rulers like Aśoka did their best to live up to the ideal. He showed the way with his statement:

> All men are my children just as I seek the welfare and happiness of my own children in this world and the next, I seek the same things for all men.[406]

We can certainly conclude that whenever the king held strong sway and performed his duites his prerogatives were enhanced and there was general welfare but when the king faltered in his duties everything, including his personal prerogatives, suffered.

All this gives us the picture of a disciplined Kṣatriya who rose to the helm of political authority.

Royal Assemblies

Two popular assemblies called the *sabhā* and the *samiti* appear to be the oldest popular bodies met with in the history of ancient Indian civilisation. However, it is difficult to define the role of these assemblies because of the obscurity of the texts. The term occurs in the *Ṛgveda* but the reference is vague. The *Atharvaveda* is full of references to these assemblies. The two bodies are described as the twin daughters of the God Prajāpati[407] thus highlighting the antiquity of these two groups.

According to early Vedic literature, the assembly wielded substantial political power. It was even vested with the power of appointing and impeaching a ruler or supervising on interregnum rule. After the king had been approved by the people or their representatives, the king consulted the assembly which may have been composed of the people in special congregations or simply of the elders and other influential persons.[408] However, there is diversity of opinion about their organisation. Ludwig thought that the *sabhā* was an assembly of only Brāhmaṇas and rich patrons, not of the people in general. In Zimmer's analysis, the *sabhā* was the assembly of the village serving both political and social functions, and the *samiti* was the chief assembly that met in the capital and acted on matters of interest to the whole state and was attended

by the king. Bloomfield thought of a more domestic use of the word. According to Macdonell it is evident from the *Śatapatha brālmaṇa*[409] and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[410] that the kings went to the *sabhā* just as much to the *samiti*. Hillebrandt distinguishes between the *sabhā* as the place of the assembly and the *samiti* or the assembly itself.[411]

In the present state of our knowledge it appears that the *sabhā* functioned as the king's council or court for the disposal of public business by debates and discussion.[412] The member of a *sabhā* was called *sabheya* or *sabhya*, the speaker was the *sabhāpati* and the sergeant who enforced law and order in the assembly was called the *sabhāpāla*.[413]

On early Vedic passage suggests that *vrātya* was followed by the members of the *sabhā, samiti* and the army.[414] There are descriptions of discussions held in the *sabhā* in early Vedic literature. In one such discussion cows and the wonderful nourishment which they supplied to mankind appear to have been the main topic.[415] The *sabhā* also appears to have been associated with gambling. In the hall of the *sabhā* gamblers have staked everything including their freedom and wives.[416] This connection between *sabhā* and gambling can be traced in later literature as shall be shown in the course of our discussion. Inspite of this appearance of a social club, simple items of village government like communal safety, village disputes, etc. were looked after by the members. "For, the member of a *sabhā* is associated with the sacred law in the Puruṣamedha sacrifice.[417] Altekar further refers to a passage in the *Atharvaveda*[418] where the *sabhāsadas* (the members of the *sabhā*) of the god Yama held royal status and were to share the sixteenth part of the merit accruing to that deity. Thus, he says it is possible that the members of the terrestrial *sabhā* also held a high status and were entitled to receive a small share of tithes and tributes paid to the king.[419] He, however, points out that the *sabhā* referred to may be the cabinet of an earthly king since the members are described as rich and attending the *sabhā* in full paraphernalia.[420]

The Brāhmaṇas mention that subsidiary and friendly kings attended the *sabhā* and participated in deliberations, as represented in the *sabhā* of King Soma. The same literature also corroborates the association of the *sabhā* with gambling.[421] The king's council as described during this period included a cortege of companions, queens, princes and officers of state—a form of primitive bureaucracy. The courtiers were called *ratnins,* or "jewels" and were supported by gifts from the king.

Thus it appears that in the early period the *sabhā* was usually the village assembly, meeting for both social and political purposes.

The *samiti* appears to have been the folk assembly par excellence including both the common people and the representatives of the nobles. This body enjoyed a position of sufficient importance to make it the king's most valuable asset.[422] The description of the *samiti* in the early Ṛgvedic hymns differs from in the later hymns. This probably indicates the change in the status of the *samiti* with the passage of time. In the earlier hymn the acquisition of political power entails the domination of the *samiti*,[423] whereas in the later hymn the *samiti* appears to refer to a social and learned gathering.[424]

The king's presence in the *samiti* is allowed in the *Ṛgveda* but the significance of his presence cannot be actually determined. He may have either commanded the assembly or simply deliberated with its members. It may be also possible that it was his office to guide the discussion to decision and agreement. The importance of the *samiti* can be understood from the plea.

> The place in common, common the assembly, common the mind, so be their thought united.[425]

The *Atharvaveda* echoes the same sentiment when hope is expressed on behalf of an exiled king who has been reinstated that his *samiti* may for ever be in agreement with him.[426] The most damaging curse of a Brāhmaṇa upon a king was that his *samiti* should never be in agreement with him,[427] again higlights the importance of this dody. "It appears that the *samiti*," observes V.M. Apte,

> was an august assembly of a larger group of the people for the discharge of tribal (i.e., political) business and was presided over by the King.[428]

From the relevant sources the impression we gather is that the *samiti* was a powerful body and probably exercised sovereign powers. The fate of a king was often regulated by the whims and fancies of the *samiti*. The partisans of a restored king also felt safe in their endeavour only when they were sure of the support of the existing samiti. Thus it appears that the *samiti* exercised considerable control over the military and executive affairs of the central government.[429] Unfortunately however, we remain completely in the dark about the practical functioning, coordination or constitution of the *samiti*.

Considering that the central assemblies of the republican states were aristocratic in nature, Altekar suggests that the same may have been the

case with functioning under monarchies.[430] He feels that as the Vedic states were small the heads of the few military and aristocratic families who occupied important political and social standing constituted the *samiti*.[431] Priests, because of their active involvement in political and military affairs may have been represented by the king's chaplain in the *samiti*.[432] If this was the composition obviously the members of the *samiti* occupied a special status in society and exercised considerable political influence.

Thus though it is true that the exact functions and powers of the two assemblies cannot be determined, we certainly cannot overlook the fact that they wielded considerable authority and probably acted as healthy checks upon the king's all encompassing powers.

However, as the administrative procedure became increasingly complex and the position of the monarch strengthened with the emergence of territorial states the influence of the assemblies declined considerably. In fact by the later Vedic age the *samiti* became almost obsolescent. The *sabhā* became the private council of the king and, having lost its popular nature it became more an instrument of the monarch. However, the village headman had become an official or attendant, of the king and was known as a non-royal "king maker."[433]

Before analysing the status of the assemblies further it would be relevant to mention here another body of the early ages called the *vidatha*. This seems to be derived from the root *vid* to know, and probably represented a religious or sacrificial gathering where the highest knowledge was required, to perform the rituals. Indra was probably the patron of this august assembly. Women figure among the members of this organisation.[434] There is little reference to class differentiation. Apparently the entire tribe was represented for there are references to people being arranged in groups, and singing and dancing.[435]

As in the earlier cases here too scholars have speculated about its exact function. To some it seems to have served as an agency for the distribution of produce. However, there is less doubt about its having served as a war council and as a religious body.[436] Some rare passages mention the king attending the *vidatha* but its administrative role is not really made explicit. Thus this dody remains shrouded in mystery with a halo of religiosity around it.

Returning to the councils and assemblies, they continued in the pre-Mauryan period but with a changed connotation. The Brāhmaṇical ritual literature mentions the *sabhā* and the *samiti* as possessing the coveted right of debate but these references may be only a reminiscence of the old Vedic

institutions and nothing more. The *sabhā* features more frequently in the Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas than the *samiti*.

The *sabhā* now acquires a new sense of the king's court of Privy Council. The *sabhā* appears to have met frequently and had its own president.[437] The members of this body ranked with the high priest or chamberlain in status.[438] As already mentioned earlier, dependent and subsidiary kings attended this *sabhā*.[439] Thus it becomes quite obvious that as the Kṣatriya in the person of the king acquired power he slowly raised himself above popular control. The popular body transformed into the king's court. At times the *sabhā* denoted the highest judicial court.

In the Sūtras the term *sabhā* denotes an assembly of the people as well as an assembly hall.[440] In another context *sabhā* is interpreted as the place for popular amusement, gambling and that is why probably forbids a student to visit such a *sabhā*[441] and imposes the same ban on a graduate. The same source further states that the king should have an assembly hall or *sabhā* built where a dice board and a number of dice should be made available to pious and truthful Āryas to indulge in the amusement of dicing.[442] The Sūtras confirm that debates were held in the *sabhā* but whether these influenced the actual royal policies and political condition we cannot ascertain. We come across mentions of rituals and *mantras* that could be performed or cited to ensure victory over rivals in debates.[443] Similar to Vedic literature,[444] in the Sūtras also we find the allusion to *sabhā* and *samiti* as the two concordant daughters of Prajāpati.[445]

Inspite of the debates and discussions held in the *sabhā* the real check on the king's actions was the *dharma* a peculiar combination of religion and law of the land. By the time of the Sūtra period the political functions of the *sabhā* appear to have receded into the background. The kings aspired to be popular with their subjects[446] therefore they would not dare to offend the religious susceptibilities of the subjects embodied in the concepts of *dharma*. The kings also cherished the desire that their subjects should always abide by the *dharma*.[447]

A peculiar development of this age arising probably from the tendency towards professional specialization, was the formation of group *sabhās, samitis* and *pariṣads*. In the Dharmasūtras the *pariṣad* acquires technical significance as a council of experts in the sacred law.[448] The *pariṣad* seems to have performed the function of bequeathing a legislative assembly which consisted usually of the ten following members, four men who had completely studied the four Vedas, three men belonging

to the three orders enumerated first (and) three men who know three different (institutes of) law.[449] Buddhist sources also refer to the *parisā* or *pariṣad* and here to a passive role is projected. A vague picture of the royal council can probably be reconstructed from the description of the *sudhammasabhā* found in the *Dīghanikāya*. From it we gather that the *sabhā* comprised the king, his ministers and the *parisā* but in the debates and discussion the *parisā* played no part. The ministers were more actively involved.[450] Another Buddhist text[451] describes Bimbisāra organising an assembly of eighty thousand chiefs, *grāmika* from the eighty thousand villages over which he had sovereignty. Unfortunately we possess no account of the reason for which this legendary number of chiefs were called. However, we may regard it as a reminiscence of an earlier institution.

The epics also provide us with certain references to the presence of assemblies. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* king Daśaratha called an assembly to debate on his intention to consecrate Rāma as the crown prince.[452] The epic also tells us that "that is no *sabhā* where there are no elders; and those are not elders who do not declare the law."[453] The *sabhāstāra* and the *sabhāsad* are mentioned frequently, probably referring to the courtiers of various grades. However, these referrences do not answer the question whether there was a formal royal council or whether the councillors exercised any effective control over the king. Probably in actual prectice once the prince made up his mind no council had any influence upon him. This is well exemplified in the arbitrary activities of Duryodhana and Rāvaṇa. The former before embarking on the great war met his council who advised against a war with the Pāṇḍavas but he paid no attention to them.[454] Similarly, Rāvaṇa attended his *sabhā* before the war more as a formal procedure than to seek its advice. In fact, he did not even attend its deliberation.[455]

According to Hopkins, the king's court was made up of nobles, royal allies, family connections and subject kings.[456] Thus the earlier assembly of the people had become an assembly of nobles by this period. The king had become the supreme military authority. In all public matters pertaining to the story itself, the priests are as good as silent and the people are suppressed.[457] The priests appear to be gradual intrusions into the knightly assembly. Only in the late, didactic parts of the epic do we find the priests assuming the post of the king's advisers. The greatest secrecy was demanded in such councils unlike the assembly of nobles where it was not considered necessary.[458] Such conclusions were probably arrived

at on the basis of references that in times of difficulty the king's main advisers were his relatives and generals, not his priests. The most prominent examples were Duryodhana's counsellor Śakuni, and the Pāṇḍavas, adviser Kṛṣṇa. Both of them were relations on their mother's side. We find that the Kuru kings generally consulted on all important matters with Bhīṣma (Duryodhana's great uncle), Vidura (Duryodhana's uncle) and Droṇa (the Preceptor). Even at a king's death, e.g., Śāntanu and Vicitravīrya, the government was not run by any council but one single relative, Bhīṣma who had renounced his claim to the throne.[459]

In the Śāntiparva[460] of the *Mahābhārata* we find mention of a legislative council. It mentions four Brāhmaṇas, eight Kṣatriyas, twenty-one Vaiśyas, three Śūdras, and one Suta. Hopkins[461] sees in this the predominance of the commercial class. But we must remember that this passage is not present in the critical edition of the Śāntiparva. However, the fact remains that all the castes were represented. The presence of the Śūdras can be seen as a recognition of the need for their loyalty and their opinion on matters of policy. Nine members were chosen to confer with the king of which four were selected from his immediate circle of advisers. Only "such persons as are endued with modesty, self-control, truth, sincerity and courage to say the proper thing, should be your law-makers. . . . Those who are of good birth and good behaviour, who can interpret all signs and gestures, who are shorn of cruelty who know the requirements of place and time, who always seek the well-being of their master in all works, should be appointed as ministers by the king in all his affairs."[462]

Probably the members of the larger council or *mantri-pariṣad* were consulted individually on urgent and important matters. The smaller inner circle probably discussed regularly the general affairs. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* the king's ministers are referred to as *amātyas* who were usually eight in number and held office according to the norm of heredity.[463] Probably the practice of secrecy in the council and recognition of the representative system dates back to this period.

In Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* we get a reference to *mantri-pariṣad*.[464] That this council was not the same as the council of ordinary ministers is clearly indicated. The king was advised to call upon both the assemblies during emergencies. Kauṭilya believed that the number of members of this *pariṣad* should not be limited, that it should consist of as many as the needs of the dominion required. This council appears to be very powerful because Kauṭilya clearly stresses that it had to consider all that which concerned

the king and his enemy and more important, the king was enjoined upon to do whatever the majority of *bhūviṣṭhāḥ* or the members suggested. Kauṭilya further emphasizes the legal position of the body by stressing that the king should consult the absent members by means of letters. Thus the *samiti* of the Vedic period gave place to the *mantri-pariṣad* out of which the king selected a few to form a close cabinet.

Seeking corroboration from other sources, we find Greek writers bearing testimony to similar institutions. Diodorous remarks,

> In this community the command in war was vested in two hereditary kings of two different houses, while a Council of Elders ruled the whole state with paramount authority.[465]

The Council of Elders reminds us of the Vedic *samiti* and its paramount authority probably refers to the kings bound by majority decision.

K.P. Jayaswal argues at length about the Paura-Janpadas as the successors of the *sabhā* and the *samiti*. According to him, Paura was charged with the conduct of municipal affairs in the capital and consisted of an advisory council of leading citizens—apparently representing all social classes. The Janapada served as a constitutional assembly for the rest of the state.[466] However, Prof. Altekar[467] has refuted his argument that Paura Janapada represented popular twin assemblies in ancient India. He points out that the expression Paura Janapada is generally used in the plural, sometimes in the singular but never in the dual. Paura probably refers to a resident of the city, not an assembly member. K.P. Jayaswal's contention that the Janapada was an institutional form also rests upon rather flimsy evidence. Though the king may have taken pains to determine the will of the people, it is doubtful that a formal constitutional check guided the king's activities.

In ancient political systems the home province was usually governed by the king and the outlying districts were administered by viceroys. Thus usually restraints on the people, and the royal authority imposed on them, and interference in their activities depended upon the distance from the capital. The activities of the restless feudatories naturally checked the growth of absolutism. Though the king by now had acquired autocratic powers, it was limited from below by various forms of local self-government.

Now an effort will be made to throw some light on the function of the local assembly.

The village has been looked upon as a political unit from the early Vedic

times in India. The *gramāni* or the leader of the village is mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*.[468] The later Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas also bear reference to the *gramāni*. The Jātaka stories also refer to the village as a political unit. The Kulavaka Jātaka[469] clearly mentions that the people of the village conducted the affairs of the locality. The Kharassara Jātaka[470] tells us that it was the duty of the headman *gāmbhojaka* to collect revenue and to protect the village with the help of the local people against the inroads of robbers. The introduction to the same Jātaka deals with the removal and degradation of one headman and the appointment of another in his place. The Pāṇīya Jātaka[471] refers to two *gāmbhojakas* who respectively prohibited the slaughter of animals and the sale of strong drink in Kāśī. The people however got these orders repealed on the basis of these being time honoured customs. The importance of the popular voice becomes evident here. Thus the Jātaka instances bear testimony to the fact that the village organisation was a "living and active" political unit. The headman possessed executive, and judicial authority but popular opinion was an effective check. Whether the king always appointed the headman is not clear because every instance of deposition is not followed by royal appointment.

The villages probably surrounded the rice fields and the cattle grazed on outlying land over which all the peasants had equal rights. According to Rhys Davids, each village had its own artisan but men of certain special trades who probably belonged to a higher social standing had their own villages. Brāhmaṇas also had separate settlements, an example being Khomadussa. Each village was like a tiny republic.[472] As mentioned earlier every one had equal rights over the common grassland or woodland. Nobody could purchase or in any manner claim to have exclusive rights over any portion of pasture or forestry. How sacred this right was can be judged from the reference in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[473] where the priest claims that by means of a sacrifice of six hundred sacrifices he can acquire exclusive privilege. Buddhist works[474] like the *Jātakas* and the *Dialogues of the Buddha*, make it a special point to describe the grant of villages containing such commons to priests. Actually the king did not grant the land as he too had no right over the land but only the tithe due to the government as annual rent.[475]

In the *Arthaśāstra* too numerous references can be found pointing towards the village being a political unit. Here too we get the concept of a headman who transacted the business of the village and could command help from villagers.

> When the headman of a village has to travel on account of any business of the whole village, the villagers shall by turn accompany him. Those who cannot do this shall pay one and a half *paṇas* for every *yojana*. If the headman of a village sends out of the village any person except a thief or an adulterer he shall be punished with a fine of twenty-four *paṇas* and the villagers with the first amercement (for doing the same).[476]

The fact that the villagers and headman were punished together probably proves that decisions were arrived at in an assembly of villagers over which the headman presided. It indirectly also brings to light the right of the individual, for he was not altogether subordinate to the corporation. If there was any conflict between the two the king usually reconciled it. The fine levied on a cultivator who arriving at a village for work does not work shall be taken by the village itself. . . . Here again the "togetherness" or corporate life of the village is hinted at. It was a total unit by itself functioning according to its customs, at times needing central help.

In post-Vedic literature the terms *pūga* and *gaṇa* representing local corporations of towns and villages are found. The word *pūga* is used in the *Vinayapiṭaka*[477] as corporation of town or village. There is a debate over the meaning of this word. Oldenberg and Rhys Davids tend to consider it as indicating an indeterminate and indefinite multitude.[478] R.C. Majumdar is of the former opinion and cites the example of the *Vinayapiṭaka* (*bhikkhuni-pātimokkha saṁghādisesa*) where *pūga* is referred to as a corporation with executive authority whose sanction was required to consecrate as nun, any female thief within its jurisdiction. Another reference given by him is "Aññatara Pūga" of a town probably indicating that there were sometimes several corporations in a town.[479]

The Dharmasūtras and Dharmaśāstras also point to village being a political unit. Manu, the great law-giver says clearly that the king should banish from the realm anyone who breaks the agreement of a village community.[480] Later law-makers like Yājñavalkya, and Nārada[481] all seem to attach the same importance to a village in the politicial scene. Injunctions like the one that the "king shall punish that village where Brāhmaṇas unobservant of their sacred duties and ignorant of the Vedas, subsist by begging, for it feeds robbers,"[482] point to the fact that the village was considered a corporate unit and held responsible in totality. However, we do not get any idea of the officer or officers-in-charge of discharging duties.

A terracotta seal bearing the legend *sahijitiye nigamasa* found at Bhita near Allahabad, in characters of the third or fourth century BC in a building

of the Mauryan epoch, probably marks the site of the office of the *nigama* or town corporation of *sahijiti*.[483] The inscriptions on Bhaṭṭiprolu Casket which also probably belongs to the third century BC mention the village headman and names of the members of the town corporation.[484] An inscription on the railing of the *stūpa* no. 11 at Sañcī records a gift by the village of Pāḍukulikā.[485] Another inscription on the Amarāvatī *stūpa* refers to a gift of Dhañkaṭaka Nigama.[486] Inscriptions of the later period like Kuṣāṇa, Cālukya, etc. also point to the corporate nature of the village.

From the above discussion we can glean the judicial and executive powers exercised by the village corporations.

The Jātakas keep referring to the fines imposed, the punishments inflicted, the right of the headman to dispose cases, etc. Whether the headman of the village always carried out these activities with the cooperation of the villagers is not clear. From the story in the Kulāvaka Jātaka we gather that sometimes serious cases, like the one of the band of robbers mentioned in this Jātaka, were referred to the royal courts.

The *Arthaśāstra* gives clear evidence of the judicial power exercised jointly by the villagers and the headman. They could expel thieves and adulterers from the village, fine villagers for neglect of work. The headman could call upon villagers for joint endeavour and fine those who refused, and carry out other such judicial activities. The king could punish the villagers and headman jointly for illegal use of the power and right vested upon them corporately.

The Dharmasūtras and Dharmaśāstras also support the above view except that the Dharmaśāstras expressly exclude violent crimes from the jurisdiction of the village corporations.

Rhys Davids in his book *Buddhist India*[487] tells us that some of the clans, e.g., the Koliyans and Vajjians had a special judicial machinery. The Koliyan central authority was served by a special body of peons or police distinguished by a kind of uniform and special headdress. They had become infamous for extortion and violence. The Mallas also had similar officials. Probably all the clans had them.

The Vajjians had a succession of regularly appointed officers "justice, lawyers, rehearers of the law maxims, the council of representatives of the eight clans, the general, the vice consul and the consul himself." Each could acquit the accused but if he was found guilty they had to refer him to the next in order above them and ultimately the consul gave the final verdict according to the *Book of Precedents*. Such intermediate officers

are not mentioned for the smaller clans. Among the Vajjians too (who are called Rājās in this passage) such a complicated procedure was probably not followed. However, the mention of the legal precedents in a Jātaka[488] and the tables of the law in another Jātaka[489] probably prove that written notes of the subject were actually in use.

The village corporations also carried out executive functions. The Kharassasra Jātaka[490] tells us that the headman collected revenue on behalf of the king, maintained peace with the help of the local people. The later Smṛti literature[491] refers to activities like construction of the house of assembly, sheds for accommodating travellers, building temples, pools, etc. Since this period lies beyond the scope of this work we shall not go into the details of it, but one may infer that such work must have been carried out in the period under discussion, and the expenses met out of the corporate fund.

The executive machinery consisted of the headman helped by a council of two, three or five persons. They had considerable power but were responsible to the people at large. The people met regularly in their assembly hall to discharge their corporate functions. In Buddhist literature we have mention of the mote halls where assemblies met.

There is an interesting sidelight in Megasthenes's account of the administration of public affairs.[492] Some "are market commissioners, others are city commissioners and others are in-charge of the soldiers. Among these the first keep the rivers navigable, measure the land as is done in Egypt, and inspect the sluices by which water is let out from the main canals into their branches, so that every one may have an equal supply of it.[493] The same persons have charge also of the huntsmen and are entrusted with the power of rewarding or punishing them according to their deserts. They collect the taxes, and superintend the occupations connected with land, as those of woodcutters, carpenters, blacksmiths, and miners.[494] They construct roads."[495]

The city commissioners were divided into six bodies of five each. Each body was entrusted with a particular work or department. This king of machinery could be applicable to other local corporations as well. The Bhattiprolu Casket inscription which refers to a committee of the vilage people seems to support Megasthenes's account. Many south Indian records (beyond our scope) prove that such a system existed up to the latest period of Indian history.

Now a brief account of the influence of caste in the organisation of the

bureaucracy will help us to understand the caste implications better. Bureaucracy, an important instrument of the state apparatus was covered by the term *amātya* in the Saptāṅga theory of the state. In the Jātakas the *amātyas* held the position of the king's companions, councillors and generals. The term *amāccakulam* probably refers to the possibility of lower class people becoming ministers. An examination of references to *amāccas* suggest that they were occasionally Brāhmaṇas and frequently Kṣatriyas. There is no case of the *gahapatis* or artisans becoming ministers of the king. Thus even during the Jātaka period the elasticity of the caste system was not so great as to permit lower class people to rise to the position of ministers.

The Dharmasūtras do not give us much idea about the caste of the *amātyas*. However, *Āpastamba* states that the members of the first three castes should be appointed to protect the people of the towns and villages.[496] According to Kauṭilya, the *amātyas* constituted the highest service cadre from which the *purohita, mantrins, samāharta, sannidhāta,* officers-in-charge of the harem, ambassadors and superintendents of some thirty departments were to be recruited.[497] Though Kauṭilya does not give us details about the caste of the *amātyas* a close study of their qualifications helps to shed some light on the question. He says, "A native of the country, of noble birth, easy to hold in check, trained in the arts, possessed of a ready wit endowed with energy and power, able to bear troubles, upright, friendly, firmly devoted, endowed with character, strength, health and spirit devoid of stiffness and fickleness, amiable (and) not given to creating animosities—these are the excellences of a minister.[498] Noble birth expressed variously as "father or grandfather being an *amātya,*" *abhijana* and *jānapadobhijātah*.[499] All these make it doubtful whether anybody other than the upper two *varṇas* could become *amātyas*.

Megasthenes's classification of the professional class of councillors and assessors who monoplised the highest posts of government. executive and judicial[500] also seem to point to the fact that avenues to the higher bureaucracy were closed to the lower castes. "The seventh class consists of [the councillors and assessors] the advisers and councillors of the king. To them belong the highest posts of government, the tribunals of justice and the general administration of public affairs."[501] That theirs was an exclusive caste is obvious because its memebrs could not marry outside their own caste, exchange one profession or trade for another or follow more than one business. Many authorities point to Hopkins' mention of

twently-one rich Vaiśya *anātyas* out of thirty-seven.[502] But another group of scholars point out that the passage in question does not find a place in the critical edition of the Śāntiparva brought out by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.[503]

Again it becomes clear that though the Kṣatriyas reached the zenith of power there were checks and balances attached to it. The Kṣatriya king could never really become a despot. In the position of ministers and councillors also they had to share power with the Brāhmaṇas if not the other two castes. Thus the entire relationship was one of give and take not of an autocrat dictating terms capriciously.

The Concept of Revolution

The theories relating to revolution in ancient India are incomplete, inconsistent and often incoherent. Most of the references are of a legendary nature. However, a careful analysis of them shows that the concept was slowly evolving even in that early period. An element of democracy can be traced in the references to dethronement and expulsion.

As early as the Vedic period, we find traces of this concept. In the *Atharvaveda* we find mention of a king who after being expelled from his kingdom was living in another country. The same king was later recalled and reinstated with the willing support of his friends and foes. The Saṁhitā[504] and the Brāhmaṇa texts record incidents of dethronement and expulsion. We hear of Duṣṭarītu Paumsāyana who was the king of a Daśapuruṣam *rājyam* or a kingdom that had come down to him through ten generations, being expelled for misdemeanour and maltreatment of subjects. The same source provides us an interesting anecdote about the expulsion of one Revottaras Rātava Cakra Sthapati.[505] This king was expelled by the Sṛñjayas because he wanted to perform the Sautramaṇi sacrifice for the already expelled Duṣṭarītu to confer on him dominion over the Sṛñjayas.

The *Pañcaviṃśa Brālmaṇa*[506] contains indirect evidence of the concept of revolution.

In it we find mention of a special ceremony called the Rāda *yajña* by performing which a deposed king may get back his kingdom.

Traces of similar sentiments can be found in the period under review. Our ancient thinkers do not recommend passive obedience to wicked and tyrannical rulers. Though they want the people to take action,

unfortunately, they do not provide any systematic exposition of the philosophy of resistance. There is no clear cut indication of the limits beyond which the king could not exercise his autocratic power or a definition of the circumstances that would justify resistance on the part of the people. One of the reasons for this vagueness may have been the fear of encouraging anarchy by an open discussion of such volatile topics.[507]

Certain circumstances justified the subjects in deposing and killing the king.

The most famous passage enjoining the people to revolt against a tyrant is found in the *Mahābhārata,* "The king is more dead than alive in whose kingdom women are easily abducted from the midst of husbands and sons, uttering cries and groans of indignation and grief. The subjects should arm themselves for slaying that king who does not protect them, who simply plunders their wealth who confounds distinctions, who is incapable of taking their lead, who is without compassion and who is regarded as the most sinful of kings. That king who tells his people that he is their protector but who does not or is unable to protect them should be slain by his combined subjects like a mad dog.[508] Force is prescribed to oppose the unlawful use of force. And the king who fails to protect his people should be abandoned—like those other undesirables, vixen wife, the leaky boat, the barber desiring the forest and the cowherd the village, the teacher who does not instruct, and the priest who is ignorant of scriptures.[509]

These passages to a certain extent indicate the limits of obedience, and actually encourage the subjects to revolt against a wicked or useless king. It is on these grounds that a moral justification of the concept of revolt is advanced. Scholars like Altekar conclude from this recognition of the subjects' right to depose or kill a tyrant, that ancient Indians regarded sovereignty as ultimately residing in people.[510] However, it may be pointed out here that simply the recognition of a moral justification to revolt does not automatically imply popular sovereignty. We do not come across any legal provision for deposing an unjust king.

The worthlessness of a wrathful king is lyrically portrayed when we find that people did not in time of peril assist a sovereign who was wrathful, miserly, intoxicated, haughty and diceitful. Even his own kin slew a sovereign who set immense store by his own self, was of little value, regarded himself highly and irascible. They did not serve him, nor did they fear when he intimidated them. Such a king was quickly dethroned

and reduced to poverty and become like straw. It is said that even dry wood may serve a purpose, or stone or dust, but a king who had been cast off is of no use. Just like a cloth that had been worn or a garland that had been trod upon, so a dethroned king in spite of being able was of no consequence.[51]

Since the prime duty of a king was to provide protection it is above discussion in all political parley. Therefore probably it would not be wrong to say that if a king failed in this duty he was for all practical purposes a failure as a king. This reasoning perhaps led the ancient writers to condemn such a king in strong terms as, useless as a wooden elephant, as a eunuch, a barren field or a cloud that gives no rain.[52] Such a king, it was believed, only brings harm to the kingdom. Because of his inaction anarchy and disasters overrun the kingdom. This is the reason why even the law-books allow the people to abandon a useless king or to kill an unjustly oppressive one."[53] Most of the texts say that an oppressive king brings about his own destruction.

The king should not destroy the special customs of families, corporations and defeated nations unless the welfare of the state made it imperative to do so. On the contrary, the king was obliged to preserve the traditional order of things, for custom was regarded sacred. A king who acted according to the counsels of a vicious and sinful minister became a destroyer of *dharma*, the very kernel of all existence and deserved to be slain by his subjects with all his family. Indeed such a ruler very soon met with his own destruction. That king who was incompetent in the discharge of the duties of statecraft, who was governed by caprice in all his acts, and who indulged in boastfulness, soon met with destruction even if he happened to be the ruler of the entire earth."[54] This appears to be the natural course of events because these rulers became loathsome and were overtaken by material or spiritual chastisement. The *Mahābhārata* aptly describes it,

> the rod of chastisement is intended for the wicked. It is not intended for self-aggrandisement. Those who seek to aggrandise their fortunes by afflicting their kingdom to unscrupulous ways very soon come to be regarded as vermin in a dead body.[55]

The Jātakas appear to portray a society where the powers and prerogatives of the king were strictly limited in practice, if not by law. Instances of deposition and banishment of kings and princes are not rare in the Jātakas. Often a spectacle of tremendous outburst of popular feelings is presented.

We read in the Khandahala Jātaka[516] that the people put the priest to death and hurried to kill the king himself in a fit of frenzied glee. However, they spared the king's life with great disaffection and difficulty and banished him to an outcast settlement.

In another instance, we find that when Brahmadatta the king of Benares died and his son became king, Bodhisatta who had once saved the life of the prince visited Benares to put his generosity to test. Now the king who was very wicked and cruel, ordered that Bodhisatta be flogged at every street corner and subsequently impaled. The Bodhisatta told the bystanders the whole story. "Filled with indignation at the recital . . . all the classes with one accord cried out," this ungrateful king does not recognise even the goodness of this good man who saved His Majesty's life . . . seize the tyrant." And in their anger they rushed upon the king from every side and slew him.[517]

In another reference, probably an exaggerated one, we find King Brahmadatta of Benares refusing to give up his habit of eating human flesh. His commander-in-chief appeals to him saying, "If, sire, you refuse to hearken to our words they will have you banished from the kingdom." The king, however, persists with his loathsome habit whereupon the people rising up say, "My lord commander what do you propose to do? How will you proceed now that you have caught the man-eating rouge? If he does not give it up have him expelled from the kingdom." And they would not suffer the king to say a word.[518]

Elsewhere in the Vessantara Jātaka,[519] we get an example of the banishment of a prince by the voice of the people. "The prince and Brāhmana, Vessya and Ugga, great and small, mahouts and footmen, charioteers and soldiers, one and all, the country landowners and all the Sivi folk" made loud reproaches and threatened that if the king did not heed their demands the people would then act against him and his son.

This passage appears to indicate that the people then were the supreme authority, the sovereign body in the state. They acted even against the king when he went against their wishes. The king in the end relented and bowed before the popular demand and banished his son. Later the same people recalled the banished prince, Vessantara and Maddi and declared, "Be thou our lord, be king and queen and listen to our call." Thus the authority of the citizens becomes quite evident. They banished the prince as well as reinstate him again later.

A similar concept of the strength of incensed citizens is reflected in another reference to a lustful king who desired the wife of a peaceful villager for his personal enjoyment. Here the king was charged with two severe offences: One, that he had violated an elementary right of a free citizen to live peacefully with his family unmolested by the state. Second, with his absolute command over the resources of the state he engaged in the despicable act of arresting and sentencing the husband to capital punishment on a false charge, just to satisfy his carnal desire. Sakka the people's god came to the rescue. The throne of Sakka "that grew hot" probably represents the will of the incensed people inflamed by moral outrage. Here, though the advent of Sakka is a mythical elements, we can trace the progress of the narrative from a same point of view. Sakka probably simply symbolises higher approval of the regicide which marked the triumph of the people's innate sense of justice, as well as the moral and religious basis underlying the duties of a sovereign.[520]

The oft quoted passage from the Telapatta Jātaka[521] where the king of Takṣaśilā refuses the demand of his sweetheart to grant her power and authority over the whole kingdom, graphically sums up the position of the king in relation to the citizens.

Kauṭilya in matters of practical politics is sagacious and suggests the middle path. According to him whoever imposes severe punishment becomes repulsive to the people; while he who awards mild punishment becomes contemptible. . . . Punishment when ill awarded under the influence of greed, anger or ignorance, excites the fury even among hermits and ascetics dwelling in forests not to speak of householders.[522] However, in another passage, he appears to share the same view as other authors. He says,

> a wicked king will surely destroy the most prosperous and loyal elements of his kingdom. Hence a king of unrighteous character and of vicious habits will, even if he is an emperor, fall prey either to the fury of his own subjects or to his enemies.[523]

The study of the texts reveals that there were various methods of revolution. Probably the most common and age-old method is the assassination of the king. We have the well-known examples of the wicked Veṇa and lustful Nahuṣa. The ṛṣis armed themselves with pieces of the sacred *kuśa* grass which they primed with *mantras* for killing the wicked Veṇa. This was the only weapon used by them.[524] Can we trace here the pride of the Brāhmaṇas in their spiritual strength against the Kṣatriyas' physical might?

Nahuṣa was guilty of seducing Indra's wife. All the gods assisted Indra in overthrowing this king of heaven.[525] This legend appears to offer probably a moral justification for regicide, viz., if the king on earth acts in the manner of Nahuṣa and violates *dharma* by abusing his subjects then the citizens may gather all their strength and behave like Indra.

In the *Mahābhārata*,[526] we find Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of all knowledge, the saviour of all, recommending the assassination of Duryodhana, without any hesitation. In fact the elders of the Kuru race are becoming guilty of transgressing duty for not reprimanding and forcibly stopping such a wicked king from enjoying his sovereignty. The subjects have a moral right to kill such a king, and save themselves from degradation, i.e., the diminishing of their own spiritual merit as a result of the king's wickedness.

This concept of collective prosperity depending upon the excellence of the king's rule and personal conduct and the moral justification of the subjects to assassinate an unrighteous king is also reflected in Buddhist literature, especially the Jātakas.

In Maṇicora Jātaka[527] the people are seen rejoicing when the unrighteous king is slain, and Sakka, the king of gods, appoints a righteous king. The Sakka says,

> If a king be unrighteous, god sends rain out of season, and in season he sends no rain; and fear of famine, fear of pestilence, fear of the sword—these three fears come upon men for him.

Another reference tells us that angered people set upon the wicked king and beat him to death because he failed in his function of providing protection.[528] This king used himself to rob the citizens and then issue a call for the thief to be caught.

The *Mahāvaṁsa* corroborates that ministers and rebel princes had recourse to assassination as a method of gaining the throne. Kauṭilya seems to suggest that the best time for the assassins to strike is whenever the king is unguarded.[529] Some of the methods of assassination suggested by him are: a king fond of hunting may be lured into the elephant forest where the deed can be accomplished with ease. A king may be killed when he attends public spectacles or takes part in a sporting event for these are the times when he is usually unguarded and unmindful. For a king addicted to wealth and women, the well-known weakness of men, rich and beautiful women, may be hired to poison him.

Examples from the historical period also testify to this method of revolution. Ajātaśatru is said to have occupied the throne by killing his father Bimbisāra. According to a Ceylonese chronicle, all the kings from Ajātaśatru to Nāgadasaka were parricides.[530]

Śiśunāga's successor who according to the Purāṇas was Kākavarṇa while the Ceylonese chronicles name him Kālāśoka also met a violent end near his city.[531] The Greek writer Curtius while referring to the person who assassinated the Śiśunāga king says,

> being not uncomely in person, (he) had gained the affections of the queen and was by her influence advanced to too near a place in the confidence of the reigning monarch. Afterwards, however, he treacherously murdered his sovereign, and then, under the pretence of acting as the guardian to the royal children, usurped the supreme authority, and having put the young princes to death begot the present king.[532]

The young princes killed by the usurper were probably the ten sons of Kālāśoka who are traditionally supposed to have ruled simultaneously.[533]

That it was rebellion which enabled Aśoka to seize the throne, is borne out by certain sources. According to *Divyāvadāna*,[534] the dying king Bindusāra wanted to appoint his elder son Susima as his successor but the ministers placed Aśoka on the throne. In this mission Aśoka had the support of the chief minister, Rādhāgupta of Bindusāra.[535] The *Dīpavaṁsa*[536] and the *Mahāvaṁsa* credit Aśoka with having killed his ninety-nine brothers.

The Greek writer Arrian says that Alexander had to quell certain insurrections and uprisings against the governors who had been placed by him over the people.

Another method employed by the people in removing a king was by banishing him. This task must have been easy in the small kingdoms that dotted most of northern India,[537] but with the formation of imperial monarchies it certainly must have been very difficult to banish such a monarch.

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* furnishes us with one of the earliest references to banishment, i.e., of Duṣṭaritu Pauṁsāyana. The Sṛñjayas also expelled Revottaras Paṭava from the kingdom.[538]

As already mentioned the Jātakas bear testimony to a number of banishments.[539]

A novel method and a very effective practical check upon the king was mass migration of the disaffected subjects. We have an instance of the loyal subjects following Yudhiṣṭhira when he and his brothers were exiled to the forest after being craftily defeated in the game of dice. Yudhiṣṭhira

of course persuades them to go back but suggests that they should seek the help of king of Pañcāla if they were ill-treated by Duryodhana.[540]

The Vaiśyas who comprised the major tax paying section of the population were naturally liable to be repressed by the state. That is why probably they are advised to show their disaffection on being repressed and neglected by migrating to the forests.[541] There is reference to all the Brāhmaṇas including the priests abandoning king Janmejaya because he had killed a Brāhmaṇa. Considering the revered position the Brāhmaṇas held in society soon the other subjects followed suit.[542]

In his Machiavellian style Kauṭilya suggests that one of the easiest method of sowing dissension in enemy country is to incite the people to demand money, grain and other necessities when the king is behaving like a tyrant, or when there is hardship in that country. In such a condition if the king refuses the people are advised to threaten to abandon the country and go elsewhere.[543] Such a punishment meant that the king would not only lose the major part of revenue but would always be in constant danger of being attacked by a larger army and eventually probably forfeiting his kingdom.

Thus we see that unquestioning acquiescence on the part of the subjects is certainly not advocated. In fact as early as the Vedic period passive resistance (usually in the form of fasting) appears to have provided an occasional check on tyrannous power.[544]

Hence the position of a king was certainly not an enviable one. The king had to meticulously follow the *dharma* and be cautious in all his movements. The *Rāmāyaṇa* clearly declares that there are two classes of foes, consisting of neighbours, and members of the same family line, and that, whenever misfortune strikes, these kinsmen are ready to seek their own well-being.[545]

In fact Kauṭilya warns the king against dangers from his closest relations. He gives examples:

> Hidden in the queen's chamber, his own brother slew king Bhadrasena hiding himself under the bed of his mother, his son killed King Kurusa mixing fried rice with poison as though with honey, his own queen poisoned Kāśirāja, with an anklet painted with poison, his own queen killed Vairantya, with a gem of her girdle daubed with poison, his own queen killed Sauvīra . . . with a weapon hidden under her tuft of hair, his own queen slew and killed Viduratha.[546]

Usually the masterminds behind revolutions were ministers, rebel princes, or the army. However, legends of popular uprisings are also not

few.

But it appears that these revolutions were not marked by extreme violence posing a threat to the very foundation of the state. This was so probably because the wise men appear to be well versed in politics which made them aware of the horrors of a bloody upsurge. Most people also believed in sanity and reasonableness and were not impulsive. They naturally kept the disintegrating forces under control and had a restraining effect upon the general mass.[547] Group politics may not have been absent but an overriding sense of respect for the essentials of law and justice as understood by the people as well as for the established usages of the land did not let these differences destroy peace. The Jātaka instances of destruction of entire kingdoms along with their rulers probably record earlier tradition.[548] The overthrow or murder or exile of a king did not necessarily produce violent changes in the deep-rooted socio-political institutions.

Thus it appears that the king was after all not such an integral part of the polity that his removal by itself could ensure chaos and confusion. Here is a dilemma: on the one hand the ancient texts dread kingless anarchical states, and on the other, kings are not considered such an important element that his deposition could bring about chaos and confusion. This dilemma can be answered if we consider that there was always another incumbent, waiting in the shadows, anxious to assume the office of kingship and begin the cycle once again. Thus "kingless periods" were only temporary phases.

References

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2. Ibid.
3. McCrindle, *Ancient India,* p. 38. (Alexander's historians observe that the Kaṭhas who were renowned for courage and skill in the art of war used to choose the handsomest man as their king. This probably relates to a condition when two people were of equal military prowess, the handsomer would be chosen. Not that beauty came before bravery.)
4. *RV,* X.174.2-3.
5. *AB,* 1.14, *"Arājanayatayā vai no jayanti rājānaṁ karvāmaha iti."*
6. *TB,* II.27.2; *AB,* VIII.12.15.
7. *RV,* X.173.
8. *AB,* VII.17; VIII.13; 14; 19.
9. *SB,* II.63.8.

10. *Rāmāyaṇa,* Uttarakāṇḍa, LXXXV.
11. *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, 220.7.
12. Ibid., 59.133-35.
13. Ibid., 59.6 ff.
14. *Agnipurāṇa,* XIX.19-28.
15. *Vāyupurāṇa,* 55-58:
    "Varṇāśramāvyavasthānaṁ teṣāṁ brahmā tayādkarot
    Punaḥ parajāstuta mohāttāna dharmannadhyāpātnayana
    Parasparavirodhena manuntaḥ punarvrayuḥ
    Priyavratottānapādo prathmantaupahīpatī
    Tataḥ prabhṛti rājān utpannā daṇḍadhārin."
16. Manu, 7.3.
17. *"Mahati Devata hi eṣa nara rūpeṇa."*
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30. *AV,* III.4.2; 56-57.
31. *TB,* I.713.
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33. *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, 67.19.
34. Drekmeier, op. cit., p. 246.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. *DN* (Aggañña Suttanta), III.90-93; cf. SBB, IV.85 ff.
38. *Mahābhārata,* XII.59 and 68.
39. See *supra,* chap. 2, pp. 76 ff. (description in the "Royal Succession").
40. Tittira Jātaka, no. 37; Saccamkira Jātaka, no. 73; Ulūka Jātaka, no. 270.
41. *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva,133.1-11.
42. *Arthaśāstra,* 1.XII.26.
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48. Ibid., VI.1.6

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60. Manu, IV.84 ff.; V.93 ff.
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62. *Milindapāṅho,* part II, VI.17.
63. *SB,* V.11.12.
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65. Bṛhdatta Jātaka, no. 543.
66. *SB,* XIII.5.4.6.
67. Patañjali Jātaka, no. 247; Susima Jātaka, no. 411; Padakusalamānava Jātaka, no. 432.
68. Manu, IV.61.
69. Ibid., XII.100.
70. *Mahābhārata*, III.3.6.
71. *MN,* II.98.
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73. Mahāsupina Jātaka, no. 77.
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126. *Vedic Index,* II, p. 299.

127. Ibid., pp. 278-79; cf. R.K. Mookerji, op. cit., p. 106.
128. *AB,* VII.18.10.
129. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad,* VII.1.2.4; 2.1.7.1.
130. Ibid., VII.1.
131. *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, I.1.4.
132. Ibid., 2.2.3; *Praśna Upaniṣad,* 6.1.
133. Faüsboll, *Jātaka,* 1.212; 285.2, p. 2; 5.127.263; 80, 85, 87, p. 4;
134. *Arthaśāstra,* I, III and V.
135. *Rāmāyaṇa,* I.80.27 ff.
136. Ibid., 80.4; cf. *Mahābhārata,* XIII.104.125.
137. *Mahābhārata,* 1.109.17-20.
138. Ibid., I.1.122.
139. Ibid., 1.223.
140. *Bhāgavata,* X.80, 134 ff.
141. *Rāmāyaṇa, sarga* 13.
142. E.W. Hopkins, *Social and Military Position of the Ruling Class* (henceforth cited as *SMPRC*), p. 52.
143. *Āpa. Ds.,* II.2.5.25.
144. *Gau. Ds.,* XI.3.
145. Hopkins, *SMPRC*, pp. 53 ff.; N.K. Siddhanta, *The Heroic Age of India: Comparative Study,* p. 128.
146. *Rāmāyaṇa,* I.23.2; III.42.23, *(ūnasoḍaca varṣoyam aktrastrac came sutaḥ).*
147. *Sāṅ. Gs.,* II.7; cf. *Vai. Gs.,* II.12.
148. Jeannine Auboyer, *Daily Life in Ancient India,* London, 1967, p. 257.
149. Dummedha Jātaka, no. 50.
150. Unlike the Epics, B.C. Sen, *Studies in Buddhist Jātakas,* p. 99.
151. Ibid.
152. Faüsboll, *Jātakas,* 7 vols.
153. *Jātaka,* vol. V, note similarity with epic guru Droṇa's practice of accepting only princes as students.
154. Beni Prasad, *Theory of Government in Ancient India,* Allahabad, 1974, p. 218.
155. Tilamuṭṭhi Jātaka, no. 252, F. 11.277:
Porāṇakarājāna ca attano putte evam, ete. nihātamānadappā situnhakkhamā lokacārittaññu ca bhavissantīti.
156. Faüsboll, *Jātaka,* III, no. 50—*atthārasannain vijjatthānānam;* no. 338—*tayo vede sabbasippāni,* pp. 122, 125.
157. Jātaka, no. 80.
158. Jātaka, nos. 55 and 252.
159. Tilamuṭṭhi Jātaka, no. 252.
160. Sen, op. cit., pp. 104-5.
161. Dhonasakha Jātaka, no. 353.
162. Faüsboll, *Jātaka*, III.158; Sen, *Studies in Buddhist Jātaka,* p. 105, *Pharūsena nāma, laddhaṁ issariyaṁ aciratthitikam hoti, so issariya vigate bhinnanavo vijo samudde patiṭṭham na labhate.*

163. Pañcaruddha Jātaka, no. 55.
164. Cowell, *Jātaka*, I, no. 50, p. 126; no. 51, p. 128; II, no. 181, p. 60; no. 287, p. 287; IV, no. 458, p. 67.
165. Fick, *Social Organisation in North-East India In Buddhas Time,* p. 94.
166. *Arthaśāstra,* I.IV.3.
167. Ibid., I.V. 6.
168. Ibid., I.V.7-9 (similar view expressed in the epics).
169. Ibid., I.V.15-17.
170. Dutta, *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, p. 33.
171. Gamanichāda Jātaka.
172. Makhadeva Jātaka, no. 9; Cullasutosoma Jātaka, no. 2; Khuddala Jātaka, no. 70; Gamanicanda Jātaka, no. 257.
173. Hopkins, *SMPRC*, p. 55.
174. *Mahābhārata,* II.5.110.120 ff., *kaccit sūtrāṇi sarvāni gṛhaṇasi . . . hastisūtrāsvasūtra rathasūtrāni . . ., kaccid abhyasyate samyag gṛhe te. dhanurvedasya sūtraṁ yantrasūtrasūtram ca nāgaram; kaccid astrāni sarvāni . . . brahmadaṇḍas, ca viṣayogās tathā sarve viditāḥ.*
175. Dutta, op. cit., p. 63.
176. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India,* pp. 141-42.
177. Ibid.
178. *Pāṇini,* IV.1.63 *(jāter astri viṣayed ayopadhāt).*
179. Ibid., VI.2.86.
180. Ibid., IV.1.49.
181. Sidhant, op. cit., p. 62.
182. *Arthaśāstra,* 1.17.
183. *Mahābhārata,* Sabhāparva, 5.125, cf. *Rāmāyaṇa,* 2100.65-67.
184. Ghoshal, *A History of Indian Political Ideas,* p. 121.
185. *Manusmṛti,* VII.38-39.
186. *Vedic Index,* 2 vols., p. 205.
187. *ŚB,* XI.6.2.1.
188. Ibid., XIV.9.1.1; *Ch. Up.,* 1.8.1; *Bṛ. Up.,* VII.1.2; cf. *Vedic Index,* II, p. 87.
189. *K.Up.,* IV.1.
190. *ŚB,* X.6.1.
191. *Vedic Index*, II, p. 87.
192. Ibid., I, p. 207.
193. Mahābodhi Jātaka, no. 528.
194. B.C. Law, *India as Described in the Early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism,* p. 258.
195. *DN*, 1, p. 9.
196. Ghoshal, *History of Indian Political Ideas,* pp. 65-66.
197. L.B. Kenny, "The Historicity of the Mahābhārata Society in the Light of Anthropology and Archaeology," Indian History Congress, *Proceedings*, 30th session, Bhagalpur, 1968.
198. Sen, *Studies in Buddhist Jātakas,* p. 66.

199. *Ṛgveda,* X.40.3; *Vedic Index,* II, p. 218.
200. *PB,* XIX.1.4; *Vedic Index,* II, pp. 200-201.
201. *SB,* 5.3.1; Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* p. 193.
202. *SB,* 5.3.5-12.
203. Basu, *India of the Age of the Brāhmaṇas,* pp. 121-22.
204. *SB,* 5.4.2.8.
205. *AB,* I.3.2.
206. *Rāmāyaṇa,* II.100.36.
207. Thapar, *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas,* p. 100.
208. Pathak, *Ancient Historians of India,* Bombay, 1966, p. 327.
209. *Mahābhārata,* I.25, 26, 29, 31, 32.
210. *Rāmāyaṇa,* VII.108.4.
211. Ibid., 101.11.
212. *Mahābhārata,* IV. 35.11; 37.27.
213. Ibid., Śāntiparva, 33.43 and 45.
214. Sen, op. cit., p. 107.
215. Agrawala, op. cit., p. 405.
216. T.W. Rhys Davids and Hermann Oldenberg, *Vinaya Texts,* Mahāvagga, SBE, 17, p. 195.
217. *Majjhimanikāya.*
218. Dummedha Jātaka, no. 50.
219. Kuśa Jātaka, no. 531.
220. Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India,* p. 207.
221. G.P. Malalasekera, *Dictionary of the Pāli Proper Names,* 2 vols., New Delhi, 2001, 1, p. 128.
222. Raychaudhuri, op. cit., p. 204.
223. Thapar, op. cit., p. 21.
224. M.C.. Joshi, op. cit., p. 36.
225. *Arthaśāstra,* VIII.2; 9.3.
226. Ghoshal, *A History of Indian Public Life,* vol. II, p. 22.
227. Guṭṭila Jātaka, no. 243; Sarabhaṅga Jātaka, no. 522.
228. Refer *infra,* chapter on "Position of Women" for details about forms of marriage.
229. Auboyer, op. cit., p. 257.
230. *Arthaśāstra,* V.2.9.10.11.
231. Kuśa Jātaka, no. 531.
232. Mudupani Jātaka, no. 262.
233. Daśaratha Jātaka, no. 461; Udaya Jātaka, no. 458; Sen, op. cit., p. 117.
234. *Mahāvaṁsa,* VII.46-47; cf. *SB,* V.2.1.10.
235. Sen, op. cit., p. 199.
236. Ibid., p. 151.
237. Sidhanta, *The Heroic Age of India: A Comparative Study,* p. 146.
238. *Arthaśāstra,* I.7.
239. Sen, op. cit., p. 109.
240. Jātaka, no. 530. Faüsboll, *Jātaka,* V.263.
mayham pitā mama bhātisadiso, sace etassa maranam olokessami mama

mahallakakale r labhissami tada laddhena pi rājjena ko attho pitāram maretva r karessamiti.

241. Musika Jātaka, no. 373.
242. Bhūridatta Jātaka, no. 543.
243. *Arthaśāstra*, I.17.
244. M.C. Joshi,*Princes and Polity in Ancient India.*
245. N.C. Bandopadhyaya, *Development of Hindu Polity and Political Theories,* part I, p. 85.
246. M.C. Joshi, op. cit., p. 148.
247. Hopkins, *JAOS,* vol. 13, p. 137.
248. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India,* p. 81.
249. Ghoshal, *A History of Hindu Public Life,* part 1, p. 97.
250. *RV,* IV.33.5; X.11.2
251. *AV,* XII.2.35; *ŚB,* XI.5.3.8.
252. Kane, *History of the Dharmaśāstra,* parts I and II, p. 595 (Hindi).
253. *AB,* VIII.12, 17.
254. *Rāmāyaṇa,* 2.3.40; 10.36.
255. *Mahābhārata,* Ādiparva, 94.5.38.
256. Ibid., 114.25.31; Udyogaparva, 148.33.
257. *Mahābhārata*, Ādiparva, 136.11.
258. *Mahāvaṁsa*, XXXVI.
259. Devadhamma Jātaka, no. 6; Makhadeva Jātaka, no. 9.
260. *Arthaśāstra,* 1.17.
261. Ibid., 1.17.34.
262. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian,* pp. 38, 71, 200.
263. Manu, IX.105, vide *The Laws of Manu,* SBE, vol. XXV.
264. Manu, IX.122.123.
265. Manu, IX.125.126.
266. *Rājadharmakaustubha,* pp. 334-35, vide Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra,* part II (Hindi), p. 596.
267. *ŚB,* VII.5.3.1-13.
268. Altekar, op. cit., p. 81.
269. *AB,* III.12, *rājānam rājaputram.*
270. Bandopadhyaya, *Development of Hindu* . . . part I, p. 86.
271. Cullapaduma Jātaka, no. 193.
272. Suruci Jātaka, no. 489.
273. Sen, op. cit., p. 80.
274. Ibid.
275. Hopkins, *SMPRC,* p. 82.
276. *Mahābhārata,* I.84; V.149.6 ff., 17; Altekar, op. cit., p. 82, n. 2.
277. Altekar, op. cit., p. 82.
278. *Mahābhārata,* V.149.25.
279. *Rāmāyaṇa,* II.1.2.
280. Altekar, op. cit., p. 82.

281. Sen, op. cit., p. 81.
282. Saṁvara Jātaka, no. 462.
283. *Mahābhārata,* I.102.1.
284. *"Hate Citrāṅgade Bhīṣmo bāle bhrātri . . . pālayāmāsa tad rājyam satyavatyāmate sthitaḥ."*
285. Hopkins, *SMPRC,* p. 81.
286. *Mahābhārata,* I.101.13.
287. *Rāmāyaṇa,* Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa, 23.
288. *ŚB,* V.2.1.10.
289. *Agnipurāṇa,* CCXIII.
290. *Mahāvaṁsa,* VII.46-47.
291. Kuśa Jātaka, no. 531.
292. Ibid.
293. A.M. Hocart, *Kingship,* pp. 101-2.
294. Bandopadhyaya, *Development of Hindu . . .* part I, p. 61.
295. Jātaka, nos. 416, 476, 531, 561.
296. *Arthaśāstra* I.15.19.
297. McCrindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great as Described, by Q. Curtius, Diodorus, Plutarch and Justin,* p. 220.
298. *Viṣṇupurāṇa,* IV. 20.7 ff.; vide Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts,* vol. IV, part I, pp. 274-76.
299. *Vedic Index,* II, p. 470.
300. Pathak, *Ancient Historians of India,* p. 209.
301. *Arthaśāstra,* I.17.34.
302. Saṁvara Jātaka, no. 462.
303. Gamanicanda Jātaka.
304. Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India,* p. 300.
305. *Divyāvadāna,* XXVI, pp. 372-73.
306. Ibid., p. 384; cf. Beni Prasad, *The State and Government in Ancient India,* p. 214.
307. R.C. Majumdar, ed., *The Age of Imperial Unity,* p. 98.
308. Raychaudhuri, op. cit., p. 211.
309. Joshi, op. cit., p. 159.
310. Ibid.
311. Ibid.
312. Majumdar, ed., *The Vedic Age,* p. 297, cf. Joshi, op. cit., p. 159.
313. *Mahāvaṁsa* (Turnour), p. 37.
314. Majumdar, *The Vedic Age,* p. 298.
315. *Arthaśāstra,* I.17.13.
316. Ibid., I.17, *"Karkāṭaka-asadharmmāno hi jankakabhakṣā rājaputtraḥ."*
317. Jātaka, nos. 373, 416, 430.
318. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India,* Calcutta, 1969, pp. 92-93.
319. *RV,* X.124. 8.
320. *AV,* III.4.2.

321. Quoted in Majumdar, op.cit., p. 94, more references can be gathered from pp. 93-97.
322. *AB,* I.3.3, *Te devā avrūvan arājatayā vai no jyanti rājanam karavāmaha iti tatheti te somaṁ rājānamakurvan te somen rajña sarvā diśo' jayan.*
323. R.C. Majumdar, op. cit., p. 99.
324. Julius Eggeling, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,* SBE, 41-109.
325. *ŚB,* IX.3.4.5.
326. *Atharvaveda*, trans. by W.D. Whitney, pp. 9-10.
327. Ibid., p. 92.
328. *Rāmāyaṇa,* Ayodhyākāṇḍa, I, II.
329. Ibid., II.67.2.
330. Majumdar, op. cit., pp. 102 ff.
331. Altekar, op. cit., pp. 82-83.
332. Ibid., p. 82.
333. Majumdar, op. cit., pp. 103-4.
334. Hopkins, *SMPRC*, "*rājatve tam prajāḥ sarvadharmajña iti vavrire.*" I.94.49.
335. Ibid., *"nṛpam cicum tasya sutam pracakrire sametya puravasino janāḥ, nṛpam yam, ahus tam janame jayam janāḥ."* I.44.6.
336. Ibid., p. 82.
337. Spellman, *Political Theory of Ancient India,* pp. 50 ff.
338. Pañcaguru Jātaka, no. 132.
339. Telapatta Jātaka, no. 96.
340. Ibid.
341. Jātaka, no. 132.
342. Cullasutasoma Jātaka, no. 525.
343. Padañjali Jātaka, no. 247.
344. Jātaka, nos. 73, 284, 387.
345. *DN,* III.93.
346. *Vinayapiṭaka Cullavagga,* IV.14.26.
347. Sen, op. cit., p. 86.
348. E.W. Hopkins, *The Mutual Relations of the Four Castes,* pp. 105 ff.
349. Ghoshal, *A History of Indian Public Life,* vol. II, p. 13.
350. Auboyer, *Daily Life in Ancient Indian,* p. 38.39.
351. *Viṣ. Ds.*, III.44-48.
352. Manu, VII.201.
353. Manu, VII.202.
354. *Bau. Ds.*, II.1.1.7.
355. *Aṅguttaranikāya,* II.1.1.
356. Hopkins, *SMPRC*, pp. 76 ff.
357. *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, 75.10; *Āpa. Ds.*, II.10. 27. 4.
358. Hopkins, *SMPRC,* p. 30.
359. *Mānava Dharmaśāstra,* VIII.39, cf. Śāntiparva, 24.12.
360. Hopkins, *SMPRC,* p. 69.
361. *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, 59.6 ff.

362. Ibid., 59, 108.
363. *Gau. Ds.*, X.7-8.
364. *MN*, 84.11.122.
365. Ghoshal, op. cit., p. 35.
366. *Arthaśāstra*, 1.4.
367. Ibid., IV.1.3.
368. Ibid., IV. I.4. For more details about the *daṇḍa* theory, see *supra*, chap. 3, pp. 51-56 (described on "Eligibility").
369. Ihering, *Laws as Means to an End*, p. 190.
370. *Aṅguttaranikāya*, III.2.14; V.14.3.
371. Rhys Davids, *The Questions of King Milinda*, SBE, 36, vol. II, V.226.
372. Tesakuna Jātaka, no. 521.
373. Sen, op. cit., p. 62.
374. Hopkins, *SMPRC*, pp. 59ff.
375. Manu, X.61, cf. *Śukranītisāra*, IV.I.215-16.
376. *Āpa. Ds.*, II.5.11.1.
377. Ibid., I.25.11; II.10.26.
378. *Vās. Ds.*, I.43-44.
379. *Āpa. Ds.*, II.10.25-26.
380. *Mānavadharmaśāstra*, VII.88.
381. Hopkins, *SMPRC*, p. 78.
382. R.S. Hardy, *A Manual of Buddhism in its Modern Development*, New Delhi, p. 153.
383. Kuṇāla Jātaka, *Aṅguttaranikāya*, I.128.206; II.205; III.189, cf. Romila Thapar, *From Lineage to State*, 70 ff.
384. Mahāsūpīna Jātaka, no. 77.
385. *Arthaśāstra*, I.19.16.1-6.
386. The entire day's description taken from the *Arthaśāstra*, I.19.16.6-33.
387. Hopkins, *SMPRC*, p. 74.
388. Ibid., p. 75.
389. Manu, VIII.145 et seq., 216 et seq.; *Mahābhārata*, XV.5.
390. *Aṅguttaranikāya*, V.14.7.
391. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, Fragment, XXVII; Strabo, XV.1.53-56.
392. *Mahābhārata*, V.129.33-39.
393. Ibid., V.35.52; 37.32 ff.
394. Hopkins, *SMPRC*, p. 61, footnote gives details of vices.
395. Sen, op. cit., p. 62.
396. *Arthaśāstra*, VII.3.ii.2.
397. Ibid., VII.3.ii.3.
398. Ibid., VII.3.ii.1.
399. Ibid., III.3.16.
400. Ibid., IV.8.9.11.
401. Ibid., II.8.
402. Ibid., IV.11.

403. The entire list recorded in the *Arthaśāstra:* Security of All Government Departments, IV.9.
404. *Arthaśāstra,* III.19.
405. Ghoshal, op. cit., p. 15.
406. RE (Kaliṅga) I.
407. *AV,* VII.13.1, "*sabhā ca ma saṁtiścāvatāṁ Prajāpaterduhitarau Saṁvidhāne.*"
408. *AV,* VIII.4.9; IX.92.6; X.97.6; 166.4; 191.3.
409. *ŚB,* III.3.4.14.
410. *Ch. Up.,* V.3.6.
411. *Vedic Index,* vol. II, p. 427.
412. R.K. Mookherji, *Hindu Civilisation,* chap. V.
413. Basu Jogiraj, *India of the Age of the Brahmanas,* p. 113.
414. *AV,* XV.9.
415. *RV,* VII.28.6.
416. Ibid., X.34.6.
417. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India,* p. 142.
418. *AV,* III.19.1; Altekar, op. cit., p. 142.
419. Altekar, op. cit., p. 142.
420. Ibid.
421. *ŚB,* III.3.4.14.
422. Ibid., V.3.1.10; *TB,* I.1.10.6.
423. *RV,* X.166.4.
424. X.191.2.3.
425. X.193.2.4.
426. *AV,* VI.88.3.
427. Ibid., V.19.15.
428. Basu Jogiraj, op. cit., p. 114.
429. Altekar, op. cit., p. 143.
430. Ibid.
431. Ibid., p. 144.
432. Ibid.
433. *ŚB,* III.4.1.7.
434. *RV,* I.167.3; X.85.26; *AV,* XIII.3.24; XIV.1.21.
435. Altekar, op. cit., p. 141.
436. *RV,* I.56.2.159; *AV,* XVII.1.15.
437. *Vājasaneya Saṁhitā,* XVI.24.
438. *AB,* VIII.21.
439. *ŚB,* III.3.4.14.
440. *Āpa. Ds.,* II.10.25.5; *Pār. Gs.,* III.13.2-3.
441. Ibid., I.1.3.12.
442. Ibid., II.10.25.12-13.
443. *Hir. Gs.,* I.15.4 et seq.; *Bha. Gs.,* II.26.59.8.
444. *AV,* VII.12.1.
445. *Pār. Gs.,* III.13.3.

446. *Bha. Gs.*, II.23; 56.14.
447. *Kauśikasūtra,* 17.19.
448. Ghoshal, *A History of Public Life,* p. 28.
449. *Gau. Ds.*, XXVIII.49; cf. Manu, XII.110 ff.
450. *DN,* 11.207-9 and 220-25.
451. *Vinayapiṭaka*, I.
452. *Rāmāyaṇa,* Ayodhyākāṇḍa, chap. 11, v. 17.
453. *Mahābhārata,* V.35.58.
454. Ibid., V.148 ff.
455. Sidhanta, *The Heroic Age of India: A Comparative Study,* p. 184.
456. Hopkins, *SMPRC.*
457. Ibid., p. 94.
458. Ibid.
459. *Mahābhārata,* I.102, 109.
460. Ibid., Śāntiparva, 85.6 ff.
461. Hopkins, *SMPRC; JAOS,* XIII (1889).
462. *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, 83.2, 7.
463. Drekmeier, op. cit., p. 145.
464. *Arthaśāstra,* I.15.
465. McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander the Great,* p. 296.
466. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* chap. 28.
467. Altekar, op. cit., pp. 146 ff.
468. *RV,* X.62.11; 107.5.
469. Kulavaka Jātaka, no. 31.
470. Kharassara Jātaka, no. 79.
471. Pāṇiya Jātaka, no. 459.
472. Rhys Davids, op. cit., p. 20.
473. J. Eggeling, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,* 3.7.
474. *Dialogues of the Buddha,* I.108; *Jātaka*, VI.344.
475. Rhys Davids, op. cit., p. 48.
476. *Arthaśāstra,* III.x.
477. *Cullavagga,* V.5.2; VIII.4.1.
478. T.W. Rhys Davids and H. Oldenberg, *Vinaya Texts,* vol. III.
479. *Vinayapiṭaka,* IV.30; R.C. Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, p.129.
480. *Laws of Manu,* ed.; also vide by G. Bühler, VIII.22; 219 n.
481. Yājñavalkya, 1.161, 361.11.31; 190-95, 214; Nārada, Intro., 7.164.
482. *Vās. Ds.*, III.4.
483. Archaeologial Survey of India, *Annual Report, 1911-12,* p. 31.
484. *Epigraphia Indica,* vol. II, p. 328.
485. Ibid., vol. II, p. 110.
486. Ibid., vol. XV, p. 263.
487. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India.*
488. Jātaka, no. 292.
489. Jātaka, no. 125.
490. Kharassara Jātaka, no. 79.

491. Vide Majumdar, op. cit., p. 143.
492. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian,* Fragment XXXIV.
493. Ibid., Fragment XXXIV.50.
494. Ibid.
495. Ibid.
496. *Āpa. Ds.,* II.10.26.4.
497. *Arthaśātra,* 1.8, 9.
498. Ibid., I.9.5.
499. Ibid., I.8.9.
500. McCrindle, op. cit., Fragment XXXVI.
501. Ibid.
502. Hopkins, "Position of the Ruling Class in the Epic," *JOAS,* vol. XIII, 1889, p. 95; K.P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity,* p. 319.
503. Sharma, "The Political Legal Aspect *c.* 600 BC, 500 AD," *JBRS,* vol. XXXIX, March and June 1953.
504. *SB,* XII.9.3.1, "*Duṣṭarītu ha pauṁsāyanaḥ Daśapuruṣam rajyādaparuddha āsa.*"
505. Ibid., "*Revottarasamu ha pātavañ cākram sthapatiṁ sṛñjayā aparurudhuḥ.*"
506. *PB,* XIX.7.1.4.
507. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India,* p. 101.
508. *Mahābhārata,* Anuśāsanaparva, 61.31-33; cf. the milder Śāntiparva, 10.29, 90.39 and 93.3.
509. *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, 57.43 ff.
510. Altekar, op. cit., p. 102.
511. *Rāmāyaṇa,* Araṇyakāṇḍa, 33.
512. *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, 78.41 ff.
513. *Arthaśāstra,* 1.4; cf. Manu, VII. 27-28.
514. *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, 93.9-10.
515. Ibid., 135.21.
516. Kandahala Jātaka, no. 542.
517. Saccainkira Jātaka, no. 73.
518. Mahāsutasoma Jātaka, no. 537.
519. Vessantara Jātaka, no. 547.
520. Sen, op. cit., p. 90.
521. Telapatta Jātaka, no. 96, "Sweetheart I have no power over those that dwell throughout my kingdom, I am not their lord and master I have only jurisdiction over those who revolt or do inequity. So I cannot give you power and authority over the whole kingdom."
522. *Arthaśāstra,* I.IV.9.
523. Ibid., I.VI.259.
524. *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, 59.100-101.
525. Ibid., Udyogaparva, 11.1 ff., 16.1 ff.
526. Ibid., 126.44.49.

527. Maṇicora Jātaka, no. 194.
528. Padakusalamānava Jātaka, no. 432.
529. *Arthaśāstra*, XIII.2.399-400.
530. *Mahāvaṁsa,* p. 37.
531. Bāṇabhaṭṭa, *Harṣacarita,* trans. by P.V. Kane, pp. 50, 161.
532. McCrindle, *Invasion of Alexander as Described by Q. Curtius, Diodorus, Plutarch and Justin,* p. 220.
533. H.C. Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, p. 22.
534. *Divyāvadāna,* pp. 369-73.
535. Romila Thapar, *Aśoka and the Decline of the Mauryas,* p. 25.
536. *Dīpavaṁsa,* VI.21.22; *Mahāvaṁsa,* V.20.40.
537. McCrindle, *Invasion of India by Alexander the Great,* p. 112.
538. *ŚB*, XII.9.3.1-113.
539. Vessantara Jātaka, no. 547; Mahāsutasoma Jātaka, no. 537; Khandahala Jātaka, no. 542.
540. *Mahābhārata,* Vanaparva, 1.92.
541. Ibid., Śāntiparva, 90.222.
542. Ibid., 150.3.
543. *Arthaśāstra,* I.13.396.
544. Charles Drekmeier, op. cit., p. 259.
545. *Rāmāyaṇa,* Yuddhakāṇḍa, 18.
546. *Arthaśāstra,* 1.20.41.
547. Sen, op. cit., pp. 92 ff.
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Chapter 4

Society

Social Framework

The aryo-indian theo-aristocratic civilization was born out of the interaction between the bronze-and-iron-using Aryans and the native Dravidians and Ādivāsīs. It certainly did not develop in a short span of time. It was a continuous process of give and take that gave India this rich social organisation. Much of it is still shrouded in mystery, much overlooked for personal biases. Hence to get a clear cut picture one has to glean the facts with great tenacity. A general idea can be formed but no final decision can be given. Oroon Kumar has given a rough division for the phases of development.[1]

The first phase was from 1000 BC to 700 BC. During this period there was the evolution of a new lifestyle, and expansion to the Gangetic valley. The second phase lay between 700 BC and 300 BC. Here there was a modification of the lifestyle by interaction with the Ādivāsīs of the Gangetic Plains. The third division was the period from 300 BC to AD 700. The full flowering of Empires took place now. Finally came phase four between AD 700 and AD 1200. Here was the final culmination of the interaction leading to the formulation of the Classical Hindu civilisation. The period 600 BC and 186 BC under discussion here falls roughly within the second and the third phases.

Following the first wave of Aryan invasion came the unruly white-skinned warriors the Ābhīras. Vāhlikas and the Mujavants.[2] They naturally did not have any respect for the Brāhmaṇa rituals, so many of the priests moved east, and the north-west gradually became "impure." Bengal and the south were outside the pale of the Aryans. Thus developments in the Gangetic Plains form the main subject of discussion in the literature. The various customs prevalant were of widely different forms among the

tribes—Aryans, Dravidians, Kolarians, and Ādivāsīs who made up the mixed population.

The Aryans were the followers of the war-god Indra. The lust for glory and passion for war were the general characteristics of these Kṣatriyas. They were a war-mad people. We have no detailed account of this stirring time when life must have been full of adventure and excitement. North India was divided into sixteen *janapadas* (people's realm). As the East Aryans (those settled in the Gangetic Plains) expanded, the bonds of tribal society weakened and gave rise to *jāti* societies. In the Gangetic valley absolute kingdoms began to appear with more resources and large armies. The invention of the bellows led to the production of more iron weapons thus enabling the Kṣatriyas to lead a more unrestricted life of war and pleasure.

While discussing this kind of society, one is struck by the predominance of the youth, the domination of the old by the young, the weak by the strong. Naturally the strength of muscles and skill in arms were the necessary requirements in a leader. Since this was the period of ceaseless warfare both for survival or for expansion, naturally fighters were more important. Hence the Kṣatriyas whose main preoccupation was to bear arms were very important.

The most significant characteristic of this society was the classification of its members into well defined groups known as caste. The basis of the social distinction was relationship, or as the Aryans proud of their lighter colour put it, *varṇa*. The division of labour leading to the formation of occupational classes, and tribal differences, especially among the non-Aryans which survived the spread of a common Aryan culture, all led to caste distinctions. The absence of a strong centralised political power which could crush differences and enforce common laws fostered the growth of a caste system. Theoretically there were four castes—Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra.[3] Each was assigned its particular avocation.[4] As the Aryans expanded and times began to change, a blending took place between the Aryan and Dravidian cultures. Racial distinction was soon overshadowed by caste distinction. In the *Gautamasūtrā*[5] the Yavanas are said to be born of Kṣatriya fathers and Śūdra mothers. The indiscriminate marital relations between the different races and Kṣatriyas must have allowed many half breeds to enter the fold of the Kṣatriyas.

The Kṣatriyas' main business was to fight, according to the Epics. The best death for a Kṣatriya was one in the battlefield. If, however, he lived to

be old, he should die in retirement in a forest.[6]

> The man who bows his head before fate is a coward, void of all courage. But the courageous man, having a heart full of energy, dares to resist fate,

express eloquently the martial spirit of the Kṣatriyas.[7]

Some of the poetic descriptions in a later treaties the *Śukranītisāra* probably can be utilised to highlight the deep-rooted code of chivalry prevalent among the Kṣatriyas. In fact similar sentiments can be traced in earlier works like the *Mahābhārata* also.

There would be demerit to a Kṣatriya whose death would be on a couch emitting phlegm, bile and wailing piteously.[8]

The death of Kṣatriyas in a house without a combat is not praised, It would be despicable, unrighteous and miserable.[9]

It was believed a Kṣatriya had earned (a noble) death, when surrounded by his relations he has made a slaughter (of enemies) on the battlefields and is well pierced with arms and missiles.[10]

One should never bewail a hero who is killed in battle. Freed from all sins he goes purified to the world specially assigned to him.[11]

That grand step which after long penance is obtained by sages is quickly won by heroes, who are killed with their faces turned towards the contest.[12]

He who does not run away in the battle earns this penance this merit, this primeval virtue and the four stages was another of a strict code of conduct for a Kṣatriya.[13]

It became imperative thus that the Ksatriyas' son should possess "strength, prowess, heroism and skill in the use of weapons and manliness. Neither the vegetarianism of a sect nor the *ahiṁsā* of a cult could successfully counteract the military ambition of the people. The national and racial desire at that time was to obtain "place in the sun." The age placed a high premium on the fighting capacity of the human beings. It was a perennial fountain of inspiration for the soldiers. A glimpse into the military India of the fourth and third century BC indicates that there was a direct cooperation between the sexes in militarism. The founding of the Maurya empire by Candragupta Maurya within about a century after the Buddha's death shows that the non-militaristic attitude of Buddhism did not affect the sociopolitical attitude of the people.

Western scholars have alleged that the Hindus were weak as a nation because belief in the caste system led to the delegation of the entire war

exercises to the Kṣatriyas, the warrior caste, who in turn did not learn how to utilize the total man power of the country. This certainly was not true in all cases because we have evidence of all classes bearing arms, especially during emergencies.[14] In the *Arthaśāstra*[15] there is mention of armies composed of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras. However, the army composed of Kṣatriyas is preferred because of their bravery and training in the art of wielding weapons. This general Bushido morality of the Hindus was an important characteristic of the Kṣatriya class.

Since the main object of the caste was to make war, certain rules were laid down: during a war he should be careful not to injure a labourer, an artisan, anyone who flees on sight of him, who asks his assistance, or who places himself under his protection, anyone who during the battle or after it lays down his arms and with supplicating hands asks for quarter.[16] When engaged in fighting an enemy he should give up all desire to live. A Kṣatriya should possess boundless ambition, should never be satisfied with his possession, the main aim should be to extend and enlarge his kingdom. Truth and justice should form the foundation of all his deeds. Humane and generous, he should always satisfy who ever came to him for help. The ideal lay in following the rules laid down in the law-books. The question however, that arises is how far the general Kṣatriyas followed these rules in society? Even the best of Kṣatriyas are seen falling prey to vices like gambling, womanising, neglecting the duties of a king, etc.[17]

The dominance of youthful precocity mentioned earlier is obvious in the heroes, of the epics who are usually young. We are told in the epics that by the sixteenth year the heroes were well-versed in all their learning.[18] The qualities of a Kṣatriya hero are well expressed in the description found in the *Rāmāyaṇa*[19] "Supreme in strength, goodness and fitness. . . . They conquer the demons and save my oblations. Of this the whole world is their witness." Abhimanyu of the *Mahābhārata* also exemplifies such a fine hero.[20] In the sphere of diplomacy and politics also we find the involvement of the young heroes. If we trace the strife between the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas from the very beginning we will find that the plots and conspiracies started when the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu were barely out of their teens.

This youthfulness naturally revolted against the older ties of clan and kindred. The weakened ties often led to the disintegration of the bonds of kinship. The main plot of the *Mahābhārata* deals with the strife between the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas who are said to be first cousins.

Now doubt has been cast by scholars whether they were really related. According to some, the Pāṇḍavas probably belonged to the Dravidian race. This they infer from their customs like polyandry, matrilinear ideas like sons being known by their mother's names, e.g., "Kuntīputra." According to these scholars, the later court poets, in order to gain the patronage of the Pāṇḍavas tried to gloss over these facts to show the Pāṇḍavas on the same cultural level as the Kauravas.[21] On the face of it, however, we cannot deny the fact that the great Bhārata war was fought between cousins and cousins, nephews and uncles. The prominent allies and friends appear to be the relatives by marriage and the bitterest enemies the kinsmen by blood. Thus the allies for Dhṛtarāṣṭra and his sons were his brother-in-law Śakuni and his son-in-law Jayadratha. The Pāṇḍavas were helped in turn by their brothers-in-law. Dhṛṣṭadyumna, Śikhaṇḍī and Kṛṣṇa and the kings, Virāṭa and Drupada, both connected by ties of marriage.

It is often argued that the bonds of kinship were very strong among the Pāṇḍaves, especially among the five brothers. They appear to be always loyal to each other. Yudhiṣṭhira with the help of his two brothers could regain his kingdom. During the war Sahadeva saved his life when in a critical position in his fight with Droṇācārya.[22] In spite of this certain passages are rather puzzling, especially Arjuna's exile in the First Book. We are told that he goes willingly to lead a life of a *brahmacārin*, i.e., a celibate ascetic. Therefore is it not strange to find that he enters into matrimonial relationships wherever he goes. Such marriages were of the greatest help during the war. It may also be that he could return only after the acquisition of such strength. Therefore probably the real reason for Arjuna's banishment was perhaps some quarrel with his elder brother about their relations as the epic would suggest, and Yudhiṣṭhira's remarks on the death of Draupadī and of each one of his brothers show that he had no great sympathy for the latter and was particularly envious of Arjuna.[23]

The destruction of the Vṛṣṇīs with Andhakas[24] again show quarrel between relatives, "sons killed their fathers, and fathers killed their sons."[25] The *Rāmāyaṇa* also provides us with similar tales of brother against brother. Such as Rāvaṇa's quarrel with Vibhīṣaṇa. The latter joined Rāma to destroy Rāvaṇa and was promised the Laṅkā kingdom as a reward.[26]

The father-son relationship,[27] which has been dealt with in more detail, also points to jealousy, and intrigue, almost a grim picture of no love lost between the two. However, this may not have been true always.

Maternal relations seem to play an important role, especially during the heroic age. The mother's brother occupied a very prominent place.[28] No one can overlook the influence Śakuni had upon Duryodhana. The Purāṇas also allot a high position to the Mātula Manu also agrees to and this view: "The female relatives have power over the world of Apsarasas, the maternal relatives over that of the Viśve Devas, the connections by marriage over that of the water and the mother and maternal uncle over the earth."[29] There are also instances of matrilineal succession. An example was the succession of Vāhlīka or Bālhīka,[30] the second son of Pratīpa. Bhīṣma's grandfather states he left his father and brother and succeeded to the rich kingdom of his mother's brother. The custom of polyandry would naturally necessitate matrilinear succession as it would be difficult to locate the child's parentage.

All this evidence indicates that a significant feature of that society was the slackening of kinship ties and building of new ties. This sort of change was inevitable in a society where constant intermingling was taking place between the Aryans and the natives, each with their own customs.

The Aryan invaders being nomads had no village, but only lines of descent, to which they clung keenly because this was the only way they could preserve their specific character. The Kṣatriyas claimed descent from the leaders of the Aryan tribes in their invasion of India.[31] Thus they were most particular about the purity of descent through seven generations both on the mother's side and on the father's side. In the Buddhist texts they are described as "fair in colour, fine in presence, stately to behold."[32] To preserve the race unchanged became the greatest social duty. Even the king was enjoined to see that there was no mixture of races.[33] Matriarchy and polyandry probably existed among the original Dravidian settlers, whereas the Aryans believed in the agnate system in defining relationships. Agricultural communities usually give a high position to the womenfolk, in harmony with the cults of natural fruitfulness, whereas fighters and conquerors naturally uphold the masculine authority.

The Kṣatriyas as we find them in the early references are represented as robbers and pillagers. Forays and cattle lifting provided the needed gain. Cattle seem to have been a highly prized property. The king himself was a cattle-owner on a large scale.[34] Formal ceremonies were held during the counting and branding of the royal cattle. Princes are seen taking

part in cattle raids. The Trigartas and the Kurus joined forces to lift the cattle wealth of the Matsya king and it was only with the help of the disguised Pāṇḍavas that the animals could be recovered after a deadly fight. The quarrel between Vasiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra centres round a cow. The quarrel of Jamadagni and the Haihayas started because of the wrongful seizure of cattle. Kṛṣṇa's boyhood was spent among the cowherds is also significant in showing the importance of cattle wealth to the Kṣatriyas.[35]

Inspite of these warlike activities of the Kṣatriyas the common people continued their peaceful occupations and helped in building up that wealth which finally helped in the establishment of the state and walled towns.[36] As the country became civilized and settled, the war men indulged in various amusements during free time. The Kṣatriya lived in the court of a prince as one of his retinue. He led an idle life in times of peace, taking part perhaps in tournaments and trials of skills.[37] He had to fight when his prince quarrelled with some other prince and also went to distant lands to fight in favour of some king who had a claim on his prince.[38] As we find in the Mahābhārata war soldiers from the east, West and South came to fight because their king thought it is his duty to join one or the other party. Not much information is available about the poorer common Kṣatriya soldiers. All Indians lived frugally, especially when in camp.

> All Indians live a simple life, especially when they are on expeditions and neither do they enjoy useless disturbances, and on this account they behave in an orderly manner. But their greatest self-restraint pertains to theft. At any rate Megasthenes says that when he was in the camp of Sandrokottos, although the number in the camp was forty thousand, he on no day saw reports of stolen articles that were worth more than two hundred drachmoe.[39]

We saw earlier that society was divided into four main castes but a study of whether the rules were followed strictly or not can throw some light on the social condition. The law-givers now totally ignored the racial distinction and concentrated on caste differences. According to Gautama,[40] the Yavanas were born of Kṣatriya fathers and Śūdra mothers, and that perhaps if they had accepted Brāhmaṇa Śāstras and customs without question they would have been even regarded as Kṣatriyas. The indiscriminate marital relations between the Kṣatriya families and Nāgas, Asuras and Gandharvas as mentioned in the epics must have given many opportunities to the half breeds and even full bred non-Aryans to enter the ranks of Kṣatriyas.[41]

The first three *varṇas,* i.e., the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, and Vaiśya came to be denoted by the term *ārya*.[42] These *varṇas* had the right of Upanayana and thus came to be known as *dvijas,*[43] and Śūdras who had no such right were called *ekajātayaḥ*.[44] The Gṛhyasūtras[45] give still finer classification about the colour of garments, colour of soil to be used for building houses, etc. But it is doubtful whether these rules were strictly followed. Though different occupations were prescribed for different castes[46] we find that where caste rules could not keep pace with the development in the Gangetic valley or where life-styles demanded a change, caste lines were often crossed over. "Kṣatriyas of Kamboja, Saurashtra and other countries live by agriculture trade and profession of arms. . . ."[47] However the three fundamental rules so often urged for the Kṣatriyas almost constitute the private code of the Kṣatriyas: (a) the guest law, i.e., every guest was inviolable, (b) the law of "not forgetting a kindness," (c) Sacredness of a refugee, or one that threw himself even in battle upon mercy.[48] The Gṛhyasūtras which deal with domestic rites describe a number of rituals for persons of the four *varṇas*. Here only the important rituals of a Kṣatriya child will be dealt with: Nāmakaraṇa, *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra* states that the name of a Brāhmaṇa child should end in "Śarman," that of a Kṣatriya in "Varman" and that of a Vaiśya in "Gupta."[49] The ceremony ususally took place on the tenth[50] or twelfth[51] day after birth. The Cūḍākaraṇa or shaving of the hair was performed in the third year for a Brāhmaṇa, in the fifth year for a Kṣatriya and seventh year for a Vaiśya.[52] However, an option is offered in the *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtras*[53] where the Cūḍākaraṇa could be performed in the first or third year after birth. Finally the ceremony of the Upanayana about which great details are available in all the Gṛhyasūtras and Dharmasūtras.[54] This ceremony was connected with the beginning of education. Most of the Sūtras prescribe the eleventh years as the year of initiation for a Kṣatriya child. The Kṣatriya child was taught the Triṣṭubh verse. The young boy warrior should be initiated between the ages of six and eleven, the proper time of the year being summer. The initiation into the caste must take place by the twenty-second year or the man becomes an outcaste and loses his privileges as a twice born member of society and becomes a *patitasāvitrika* (i.e., they have lost their right of learning the Sāvitri). To distinguish himself from men of other castes the warrior wore a hemp thread, a girdle made of bowstring and a staff long enough to reach the forehead, while other castes had different specifications about these features.

Ceremonial distinctions of address also helped to distinguish between Kṣatriyas and other castes. Outwardly dress of course formed the mode of recognising a caste, e.g., the men of the people's caste wore cowhide or goat skin as an upper garment, the warrior wore deer skin each representing the animals near to his caste, i.e., agriculturists vs. hunters or warriors.[55] The proper salutation for a warrior was extending the arm level with the breast. This probably was a remnant of an Aryan custom because in modern times we find Hitler, an ardent Aryan protagonist using it.

The concept of *varṇa* was widely prevalent during Buddha's time as well. In their literature also we find biases as in the Brāhmaṇical literature. We must not forget that the stronghold of the Brāhmaṇas lay in the Madhyadeśa and the rules regarding social observances were followed there strictly. As the Aryans expanded eastwards, the Brāhmaṇical cult became more and more diluted and so the social rules in the eastern provinces—Kāśī, Kosala, Videha and Magadha the birthplace and stronghold of Buddhism and early Buddhist literature were more lax.[56] The writers of the Buddhist texts were monks who were unsympathetic if not hostile to the Brāhmaṇical rules. Hence deviations from these orthodox rules were not frowned upon.[57] Besides these facts, the Buddhist writers mainly belonged to the Kṣatriya caste and naturally caste loyalties were bound to introduce biases.[58] Hence during this time the hierarchical order of the castes was changed by placing the Kṣatriyas on top, followed by Brāhmaṇa then Vaiśya and finally the Śūdra.[59] Though the order of the first two *varṇas* were reversed the order of the other two *varṇas* remained unchanged.[60]

The laxity of the caste system is also inferable from comments like

> Khattiya, Brāhmaṇa, Vessa, Sudda, Caṇḍāla, and Pukasa can all be virtuous and self-restrained and attain Nirvāṇa; among them, when they have attained peace of the soul there is no one who is better and no one who is worse.[61]
>
> A man does not become a Brāhmaṇa by his plaited hair, by his family, or by birth; in whom there is truth and righteousness, he is blessed he is a Brāhmaṇa.[62]
>
> Not by birth does one become an outcaste, nor by birth does one become a Brāhmaṇa, by deeds one becomes an outcaste by deeds one becomes a Brāhmaṇa.[63]

The same idea is reflected in the epics as well when Yudhiṣṭhira on being questioned by a Yakṣa answers,

> Listen dear Yakṣa, Brāhmaṇahood is not based on descent, the study of the Vedas

> or on learning; character no doubt is the basis of Brāhmaṇahood. The Brāhmaṇa should maintain above all his character by all means. . . . A man without character, though he may have learnt all the four Vedas is not better than a Śūdra. He who offers the Agnihotra or fire sacrifice and at the same time curbs his senses is known to be a Brāhmaṇa.[64]

Some even preached that "The four are equal. He who cherishes hatred is a Caṇḍāla and he who does good is a Brahmin."[65]

The vehemence with which Gautama Buddha preached against caste distinctions prove the deep rootedness of the institution. The theory of the four *varṇas* was not only known to the Buddhist writers but was so strongly embedded in their consciousness as well that they could not keep themselves aloof from it.[66] Thus though the equality of the four *varṇas* is continuously stressed, the Buddhist writers place the Kṣatriyas on top. Why should this be preached if the *varṇa* system was really ignored by the Buddhists? These Kṣatriyas claim descent from the leaders of the Aryan tribes though Rhys Davids mentions some Kṣatriyas as descended from the chiefs and nobles of the Dravidian and Kolarian tribes who had preserved by conquest or by treaty their independence or their social rank.[67]

Two strains of thoughts thus emerge from the above discussion, the Sūtra literature portrays the caste system as a rigid system with clear cut demarctions. Birth not craft, was slowly becoming the basis for caste distinction and each preceding *varṇa* was superior by birth to the one following.[68] *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*[69] also emphasizes origin and particular sacraments as the distinguishing elements of the castes. The Buddhist texts on the other hand paint a picture of freedom at least apparently. They do not indicate that the choice of a craft depended upon a caste. The concept of equality was promulgated by the Buddhists.

> Be it Khattiya, Brahmin, Vessa, Sudda, Caṇḍāla, and Pukkusa, he is the best from whom one can learn what is right.[70]

However, from the references that we get, the actual practices neither adhered to the Sūtra view totally nor the Buddhist view genuinely. Rhys Davids points out that below the four castes mentioned earlier there is mention of other low tribes and "low trades"—*hina jātivo* and *hino sippani*. Among the first were workers in rushes, bird-catchers and cart-makers aboriginal tribesmen who were hereditary craftsmen in these three crafts.[71] Among the latter were also mat-makers, barbers, fitters, weavers, and

leather workers. A social turmoil was taking place. Caste division was recognised but not strictly followed. In the earlier times the most prominent example of caste exchange is of Viśvāmitra who was a king, desirous of possessing the sage Vasiṣṭha's fine cattle. Finding his skills of war fail against the *ṛṣi* he wanted to become a Brāhmaṇa and through asceticism became one.[72] Another instance is of Devāpi and Sindhudvīpa who were originally Kṣatriya princes but became Brāhmaṇas.[73] When Yudhiṣṭhira was disgusted with war he wanted to retire to the forest and cited examples of many earlier kings who had done the same.[74] However, the right to do this was not conceded without a strife, Arjuna said, "Not everyone that goes into the woods is a true renouncer of the world; but he that lives a holy life is the true hermit, moreover, it is a priest's business to be a hermit, the sages say so. The priests ought to have gifts from the king but if the king becomes a priest there will be no one to enrich the priests. Besides a king who has conquered the earth and then gets no enjoyment as fruit of his trouble lives fruitless life." The queen Draupadī said, "A warrior that cannot inflict a blow is not splendid, he does not get land, to be mild to all creatures, to take gifts to study and to do penance, ought to be a priest's duty not a king's for a king ought to protect people and punish people. . . ."[75]

Later literature like the Purāṇas[76] refer to numerous instances of Kṣatriyas becoming Brāhmaṇas which may permit us to conclude that in the earlier period when social rules were not so strict such instances must have been more frequent.

The Brāhmaṇas were not such an intolerant and exclusive caste that penitents belonging to other castes could not be initiated by the Dīkṣā ceremony or the investiture of the triple cord.[77] There are also instances of Brāhmaṇas becoming almost Kṣatriyas. We hear of Rāma Jamadagnya[78] who though a Brāhmaṇa exterminated the Kṣatriyas off the earth twenty-one times! Then we have the story of Kṛpa and Droṇa.[79] Kṛpa was the son of sage Gautama but mastered the art of four kinds of arms[80] and in the war he fought valiantly on the side of Duryodhana. Droṇa, the son of the famous Bharadvāja was a master in the art of warfare and even schooled the famous princes in martial skills. He even became the commander-in-chief in Duryodhana's army[81] for a time. Cases of intermarriage are also found, e.g., sage Cyavana married princess Sukanyā.[82] Sage Agastya's wife was Lopāmudrā, the princess of Vidarbha. Though the Pāṇḍavas were disguised as Brāhmaṇas it did not prevent them from winning King Drupada's daughter in a contest actually meant only

for the Kṣatriyas.[83] We also have instances of Kṣatriya bridegrooms with Brāhmaṇa brides—King Duṣyanta married Śakuntalā presumably the daughter of a priest.[84] Yayāti married the daughter of the sage Śukra.[85]

Though the orthodox writers were staunchly against these kind of interminglings, allowance had to be made for the polygamous impulse of the male sex in a patriarchal society and also for the lust for beauty and wealth. The general rule was: "Three wives were allowed to a Brāhmaṇa, in accordance with the order of the castes, that is, one each from the three higher castes, two to a Rājanya (i.e., one from the Kṣatriya and one from the Vaiśya castes), one to the Vaiśya (i.e., from his own caste) one Śūdra wife besides, to all according to some, without using mantras at the ceremony of wedding."[86]

What is of more importance is the fact that the issue of a Brāhmaṇa by a wife of one of the three higher castes is regarded as a Brāhmaṇa.[87] Kauṭilya[88] also states the same idea, "the sons of a Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya born of a wife belonging to the immediately next *varṇa* are of the same *varṇa* (as the father), of a wife belonging to the next but one *varṇa* are not of the same *varṇa*.The Sūtra writers in their efforts to discourage the intermingling of castes declared, "those born in the inverse order (from fathers of a lower caste and mother of a higher caste) stand outside the pale of the sacred law (i.e., do not possess the rights of initiation, etc.)."[89] In actual practice probably the children of mixed unions among the three higher castes still took the rank of the father. However, marrying within one's caste was constantly upheld. Even Manu[90] proclaims sons begotten by twice-born men from wives of the next lower castes are (treated as) similar to their fathers but blamed on account of the fault inherent in their mother.

The Jātakas also show that in actual practice the caste system was not so rigid.

> . . . now I see how worthless in this world is birth and lineage, blood and family and how much the best is virtue. I will embrace the religious life; allow me to do so![91]

People could and did change their vocation by adopting one or other of the trades. Thus we see a lovelorn Kṣatriya working as a potter, basketmaker, reedworker, garlandmaker and cook, a Vaiśya works as a tailor, or potter and yet maintains his high born connections, a Brāhmaṇa takes to trade and makes money or holds the post of an assistant to an archer without any degradation.[92]

Thus we see that during the period under discussion caste barriers were not as rigid as in the later period. The seeds of a rigid caste system had been sown and society was certainly changing. During the heroic age the Kṣatriyas naturally held a higher position. Generally the Brāhmaṇas did not care for secular power and worldly wealth, being dependent on the patronage of the kings. In the later period, however, the importance of the priest increased immensely and that of the warriors diminished proportionately. Spirituality came to be more prized than valour.[93]

The priests and the warriors were always prominent but we do not hear much about the other two castes—Vaiśyas and Śūdras. They were usually engaged in peaceful occupations. Vaiśyas were engaged in the professions of agriculture, trade, cattle-rearing and usury. The Vaiśya occupation was not regarded as contemptible for it was recognised that a destitute Brāhmaṇa may follow the Vaiśya occupation.[94] Bhalandana, e.g., becomes a Vaiśya.[95] The Vaiśya's position was, however, in general, marked by the holiness of his being twice-born, i.e., could read the Vedas and offer sacrifices. There is a reference that non-Brāhmaṇas and non-Kṣatriyas could enter Brāhmaṇahood and Kṣatriyahood.[96]

The Śūdras are regarded by all as the fourth caste. They were supposed to survive by serving the higher castes and if necessary by practising the mechanical arts. They were never given a high status in society. Later literature made the Śūdras shorn of rights and privileges.[97] The story of Ekalavya[98] probably proves that the low castes were disarmed. This was probably done in fear of the numerical strength of the "low *jātis*." If they rose up in revolt they certainly could overthrow the total set-up.

We get epigraphic evidence confirming the presence of the caste system in Aśoka's time. Aśoka's officers were appointed to work among the warriors (*bhaṭamayeṣu*), Brāhmaṇas and the Ibhyas i.e., Vaiśyas. It seems that *dāsabhaṭaka* in Aśokan inscriptions stands for the Śūdras.[99]

L.B. Kenny[100] gives a totally different view of society, especially during the Epic period. He points out that the study of the tactical operations of the great Mahābhārata war reveals certain interesting facts. Man's most ancient arms were his hands, nails, teeth, stones, branches of trees, clubs, *gadās,* spears, boomerangs and bows and arrow. These primitive weapons were used by the Mahābhārata heroes to kill enemies, to seize women and flocks and to get food. In the fight between Vālī and Sugrīva both used their hands, nails, teeth, branches of trees and stones

freely against each other.[101] Bhīma and Kīcaka also used their hands, nails and teeth in free style wrestling ultimately leading to the death of the latter by suffocation and by separating the various limbs of his body by the former.[102] The fights between Bhīma and Jaṭāsura,[103] Bhīma and Anukicakas[104] with the Kirmira[105] and Baka[106] reflect similar strategy and tactics. Bhīma settled an issue with Jarāsandha by cutting the latter in half.[107] These inhuman fights reflect a savage society. The reference to cannibalism in the depiction of Bhīma drinking Duśāṣaṇa's blood again points to a savage society.

The uprooted tree, a prototype of the rugged wooden club used by the primitives, was probably the direct antecedent of the *gadā* handled so efficiently by the Mahābhārata heroes. Another interesting missile was the *cakra* used by Kṛṣṇa.[108] The bow and arrow was another piece of mesolithic equipment[109] handled by Arjuna and Droṇa with great skill.[110] Arjuna's contented reference to hunting with traps,[111] and the death of Kuntī, Gāndhārī and Dhṛtarāṣṭra in a forest fire,[112] and the death of Kṛṣṇa by an arrow of a wild hunter[113] indicate that these people belonged to a group of food-gathering forest hunters. The use of barks and skins as garments by Pāṇḍavas[114] reflect again the savagery of the people.

With the domestication of animals and cattle-raising, hunting became a secondary occupation. The dog was the earliest species linked with man from the mesolithic age.[115] In this respect the association of the dog with the Pāṇḍava Yudhiṣṭhira whom the animal accompanied to heaven[116] is very significant. The cattle raids[117] also indicate a society of pastoral nomads.

The social practices evident from the innumerable evidences of strange marital relationships where women were seized and shared also reflect the savage state. The birth of Ghaṭotkaca to Hiḍimbā from Bhima,[118] the birth of five sons to Bali's wife Sudeṣṇā from Dīrghatama the blind *ṛṣi*,[119] Arjuna's conjugal relation with Ulupi[120] and subsequent union with Chitrāṅgadā.[121] The births of Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Draupadī to Drupada's wife by two *ṛṣis* Yaja and Upayaja,[122] the birth of Karṇa to Kuntī by Sūrya before her marriage,[123] all indicate a society unaware of marriage rules and restrictions. This situation slowly changed as the institution of marriage evolved out of the reciprocity between social groups.

The abduction of Subhadrā[124] by Arjuna, Draupadī by Jayadratha,[125] of Sītā by Rāvaṇa[126] reflect the savage custom of forcibly carrying off women from neighbouring tribes.[127] Polyandry followed by the Pāṇḍavas

was also a primitive custom permitting "a wife to consort with more than one man."[128]

Draupadī being shared by the five Pāṇḍava brothers[129] was not considered unrighteous because her early ancestors too followed the same custom.[130] Gautamī was the wife of the seven *ṛṣis* and Varkṣi shared by Pracetasa brothers.[131] Kuntī the mother of the Pāṇḍavas was shared by Dharma, Vāyu, Indra,[132] and the two Aśvinīkumāras.[133] Also nowadays there is a similar system prevalent among the Toda tribe of the Nilgiri hills.

In conclusion, we must note that savagery was not a conspicuous cultural phase of the *Mahābhārata* but it is the earliest represented therein. This concept certainly needs the combined researches of anthropology, archaeology and history. Not single one of the outlooks can be convincing.

Mutual Relations

The Relations between the Ruling Class and the Brāhmaṇas

"The priest is the standard of the world," says formal law, "The king is the standard," says the epic.[134] In this controversy lies the entire relationship between the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas.

A glimpse at their relationship during the Vedic period is necessary to understand their relations during the period under review. The word *brāhmaṇa* in the neuter gender usually denotes a hymn, an author, or a reciter of a hymn.[135] In the masculine gender the son of a Brāhmaṇa or priest.[136] N.K. Dutta is of the opinion that by this time the function of a Brāhmaṇa had already become a profession.[137] He quotes from the *Ṛgveda* to prove it: "Various are the thoughts and endeavours of us different men. The carpenter seeks something broken, the physician a patient, the Brāhmaṇa someone to offer sacrifices."[138] The two castes Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya are mentioned for the first time in the sense of Brahmā as "prayer," and Kṣatra as "valour."[139] In course of time these senses changed to mean the two *varṇas*.[140]

Instances of Viśvāmitra who was a Rājanya of the Bharata and Kuśika families but who also wrote many Vedic hymns, was the priest of Sudās and even officiated as the *hotṛ* at a sacrifice of king Hariścandra,[141] probably led to the inference that there was a close relationship and cooperation between the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas.[142]

This concept is more explicitly dealt with in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* which declares that only Brahmā and Kṣatra are complete and they are

everything.[143] Their completeness is well expressed in the verse: "The Mitra, the priesthood could stand without Varuṇa, the nobility. But Varuṇa could not stand without Mitra and whatever deed Varuṇa did unsped by Mitra did not succeed." Then Varuṇa called upon Mitra and asked him to unite with him saying: "I will place thee foremost, sped by thee, I will do deeds! So be it! So the two united and henceforward whatever deed sped by Mitra-Varuṇa did he succeeded in that."[144]

But in this vision of unity and completeness we can detect a strain of superiority claimed by the Brāhmaṇas because it clearly states Brahmā can be without Kṣatra but Kṣatra cannot be without Brahmā. Similar claims are expressed in many other contexts: "To him the people with free will pay homage the king with whom the Brāhmaṇa hath precedence."[145]

The Brāhmaṇas are considered the progenitors of the Soma[146] and are even invoked for protection, may be, because of their unfluence with the gods. Similar idea is reflected when Soma is declared the king of the Brāhmaṇas not the mortal king.[147] Hence the mortal king had no authority over the Brāhmaṇas.

The *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* puns on the word *mukha* as both chief and mouth thus making the Brāhmaṇa chief for he was created from the mouth.[148]

Some scholars, however, feel that the reference in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* about the Rājasūya sacrifice[149] where the Brāhmaṇa sits below the Kṣatriya and receives respect after the Kṣatriya actually shows, the superiority of the Kṣatriyas.

Sometimes attention is drawn to non-Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya teachers who are mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[150] to prove the superiority of the Kṣatriyas. But R.K. Mookerji feels they were not held in high esteem.[151] Authors such as Macdonell and Keith feel that one should not attach much significance to these as priests would naturally represent their patrons interested in their sacred lore.[152]

From this time onwards there existed an undercurrent of tension between these two castes. The Brāhmaṇas knew that the Kṣatriya with their superior military strength could harass the Brāhmaṇas at their will therefore they concentrated their whole energy in establishing their spiritual domination. The Brāhmaṇa always declared the greatest disaster befalling a Kṣatriya who tried to oppress them. Even the Brāhmaṇa's wife is credited with immeasurable spiritual might. An interesting episode is mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* about how the boundless sea, the firece glowing fire and the heavenly flood exclaimed against the

outrage on a Brāhmaṇa, how the seven *ṛṣis* proclaimed the might of a Brāhmaṇī, and it were the gods Mitra and Varuṇa who helped her restoration. Finally it is stated the king who restores the Brāhmaṇa's wife enjoys the earth and has full sway.[153]

Still more severe punishments and calamities are recorded for robbing a Brāhmaṇa of his property. The total destruction of the Kṣatriya is advocated: A Kṣatriya who takes away the cow of a Brāhmaṇa is deprived of *sunṛta, vīryam, oja, teja, saha,* and *balam,* meaning happiness, valour, force, brilliance, power, and strength respectively. Goodluck, speech, sense, fortune and virtue disappear, The king's holiness, dominion, kingdom, subjects, brightness, glory, honour and property, righteousness, truth, sacrifice, progeny and cattle all will be lost. If the king does not restore the Brāhmaṇa's cow then he is bereft of home, abode, and progeny. This surmises the total annihilation of the Kṣatriya.[154]

Nature's abundance is also withdrawn from a Kṣatriya who humiliates and deprives a Brāhmaṇa of his property: "the trees do not give shade and rain does not pour in the kingdom."[155] These vehement admonitions and warnings prove that the Kṣatriyas and Brāhmaṇas struggled for power and often encroached upon each other's privileges. The Brāhmaṇas at times tried to weaken and destroy the Kṣatriyas by means of the Vaiśyas. Some such examples are quoted by Shanta Anand.[156] One of them is the formula found in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.* It prescribes that:

> if one wants to smite the Kṣatra by the Viś he should thrice divide the *nivid* in recitation by the hymn; the *nivid* is Kṣatra and thus the Kṣatra is smitten by the Viś and if he wants the Viś to be smitten by the Kṣatra he should thrice separate the *nivid* with the recitation of the hymn; the hymn is Viś.[157]

In India this struggle never assumed the shape of a class warfare. The fights were usually limited to individual kings trying to prove his worth and each time the Brāhmaṇas tightened their grip over their special claims and prerogative. This certainly must have been challenged by the Kṣatriyas with ferocity but such stories have either totally disappeared or been embellished with elements of fancy and miracle to prove priestly superiority.[158]

By the Sūtra period both the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriya had established themselves as the spiritual and temporal heads of society, respectively.

The Brāhmaṇs now tried to strengthen their superior position further. They knew that unless they entrenched their position with further

religious sanctions the temporal authority which had grown in power too would lord it over them.

Now the specific duties of the various *varṇas* came to be fixed. The Brāhmaṇa came to be revered by the other *varṇas*.[159] The king came to be declared the master of all with the exception of the Brāhmaṇa "Kṣatriyas who are assisted by Brāhmaṇa prosper and do not fall into distress."[160] The texts go to the extent of declaring that a Brāhmaṇa, though only ten years old, and a member of the kingly caste though a hundred years old, must honour the Brāhmaṇa as a father.[161] "If a king meets a Brāhmaṇa on the road he must give way to the Brāhmaṇa for the road belongs to the latter."[162] "A Brāhmaṇa shall not rise from his seat to receive a Kṣatriya or a Vaiśya (even if they be superior and learned).[163]

These privileges and prerogatives became more widespread and stringent as time passed. Almost servile obedience was demanded from the Kṣatriya (king) towards the Brāhmaṇa by the time of Manu. Even if a Brāhmaṇa commits all the sins (offences) he should not be killed.

He should only be expelled from the kingdom unhurt and with his property complete and unmulcted. There is no greater *adharma* than the killing of a Brāhmaṇa. Therefore, the king should never even think of it.[164]

> Let him (the king) not, though fallen into the deepest distress provoke Brāhmaṇa to anger, for they when angered can instantly destroy him together with his army and his vehicle who cannot escape destruction when he provokes to anger those men, by whom the fire was made to consume all things, by whom the water of the ocean was made undrinkable and by whom the moon was made to wane and to wax again . . . who could create other worlds and other guardians of that world and deprive the gods or their divine status. The Brāhmaṇa be the ignorant or learned is a great divinity, just as the fire, whether carried forth or not carried forth is a great divinity.[165]

The Brāhmaṇa is an external incarnation of the sacred law, lord of all created beings. Owner of all that exists in the world.[166]

Inspite of this claim to almost "godly" superiority the Brāhmaṇas were shrewd enough to realise that a coalition with the Kṣatriyas was necessary to keep the other two *varṇas* subservient. Therefore the Brāhmaṇa authors put down that a king and a Brāhmaṇa deeply versed in the Vedas together uphold the moral order in the world.[167] Brāhmaṇas united with the Kṣatriyas uphold the gods, manes and men.[168] It is declared that the fourfold human race is dependent on the king and the Brāhmaṇa[169] as the latter declares the duties of the *varṇas* and the former governs accordingly.[170]

This close association is supported when *Āpastamba* states that men of the first three castes should be appointed to protect the people in the town and village.[171] Various renowned scholars[172] have touched upon this correlation between the two upper castes. U.N. Ghoshal cites a number of examples which prove that the coordinated efforts and functions of the two powers (Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas or King) safeguarded and protected the interests of the other sections of the society.[173]

The Buddhist texts also corroborate the close relation petween the two upper castes. It is proclaimed that the Bodhisattva takes birth only in the house of a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya, never in the house of a lower caste. Whichever caste held in high esteem at the time of his birth the Bodhisattva appears in that caste....[174] In the Kannakanthala Sutta the Buddha himself is said to have stated that of the four classes: Khattiya, Brāhmaṇa, Vessa, and Sudda, the first two are ranked superior to others in receiving salutes, seats, respects, and services.[175]

Whenever a king loses his throne it is usually to a Brāhmaṇa,[176] because the Buddhists also believe that the king should be of noble birth.[177] This again reflects the close association.

However, when the Brāhmaṇa tried to prove their superiority the Kṣatriyas naturally reacted, reflecting the in-born competition and antagonism between the two. This is specially reflected in the Buddhist texts.

The Brāhmaṇas are referred to as low born or *hīna jacco*[178] and in enumerating the *varṇas* the Kṣatriyas are mentioned first, i.e., placed above all the other *varṇas,*[179] because the Kṣatriyas are considered *settho* (*śreṣṭha* or the best).[180]

The pride of the Kṣatriya class is reflected in the following instances: Three Brāhmaṇas for some offence of other outlaw a Brāhmaṇa and banish him from the land and township. If a Kṣatriya had done this to a Kṣatriya, the Brāhmaṇas would have admitted him to a connubium.[181]

In an enlightening passage, Ambattha asks the Buddha whether the child of a Kṣatriya father and Brāhmaṇa mother is of better social status or the child of a Brāhmaṇa father and Kṣatriya mother. The Buddha's answer is,

> whether you regard it from the male or female side, it is the Kṣatriya who are the best people and the Brāhmaṇas, their inferiors, for the Kṣatriya even if he has fallen into the deepest degradation is still the best and the Brāhmaṇas are his inferiors.[182]

Rhys Davids quotes a Jātaka, 5.280, where a Brāhmaṇa takes as his only wife the discarded consort of a Kṣatriya. The people laugh at him, it is true, but not because he is acting in any way unworthy of his social standing but only because he is old and ugly.[183]

The Brāhmaṇas are represented as engaged in various types of activities: in trade, as assistants to an archer who had previously been a weaver, as hunters and trappers, wheelwrights, engaged in agriculture, hiring themselves as cowherds and even goatherds.[184] They are also found as teachers or employed in the king's court interpreting signs or predicting the constellation of stars or the future of the newly born prince.[185]

This depiction of Kṣatriyas as superior was probably because the Buddhist writers who mostly belonged to the Kṣatriya caste, were ill disposed towards Brāhmaṇas and partly because of the actual superiority of the ruling class and also because of the degraded condition of the Brāhmaṇas in the eastern provinces, the home of Buddhism.[186]

Many Kṣatriyas showed as much zeal as the Brāhmaṇas in spiritual learning. Lord Buddha himself was a Kṣatriya whose spiritual leanings led to the propagation of Buddhism itself. He is seen preaching to the Brāhmaṇas who is a real Brāhmaṇa and how they lost their ancient Brāhmaṇical glory.[187]

Jātakas mention kings as teachers of the Vedas or as retiring to the forests in their old age.[188]

Kṣatriyas are often represented as eminent philosophers specially of the Upaniṣadic school of learning. Brāhmaṇas are said to be pupils of Kṣatriyas in this branch of learning. Such propounders were king Janaka of Videha,[189] Pravāhana Jaivāli, Aśvapati Kaikeyī.[190] Bhandarkar[191] upholds this view of the Kṣatriyas as original philosophers but Prof. Kane feels Kṣatriyas did not formulate the doctrine of the soul as the Upaniṣads mention Brāhmaṇa propounders as well and there is not enough evidence to make such a general statement.[192] Following the example set by Buddhist literature Jaina literature also reverses the order of their social standing. The Kṣatriyas are mentioned as above the Brāhmaṇas. Certain priests with extraordinary qualities were looked up to, but as a class the Brāhmaṇas were considered as dependent upon the nobles for their livelihood and existence. Thus the Kṣatriyas of this age are represented as endowed with temporal power, proficient in spiritual knowledge and proud of their lineage, "the perfect noble." Naturally we find the Kṣatriyas enjoying a meteoric rise in every field.[193]

But the Brāhmaṇas had also secured their place in society. The services offered by them had become so exclusive and indispensable that even a king could not ignore them and needed their services, especially in the religious sphere. In the *Mahābhārata* there is mention of the exclusive privileges bestowed on them: exemption from punishment by the king; exclusive rights of receiving gifts, and freedom from taxation.[194]

The Kṣatriyas' duty towards the Brāhmaṇa is well expressed in the oath administered to Pṛthu. Take this oath again, "I will protect on Earth (Brāhmaṇas) by action mind and words."

"I will not act at any time according to the unchangeable dharma laid down in the Daṇḍa Nīti." Oh lord, I also make this promise: "I will not punish the Brāhmaṇas and I will protect the whole world from the admixture of *varṇas*."[195]

The King's power is fivefold says the pedant priest: brute force, that derived from his ministers, from his wealth, from his descent, the fifth wherein lies all wisdom, and this wisdom is the hoard of the priests.[196]

The epitome of priestly power is well summed up in the statement. Everything and everybody must now stand under the order of priests and worship them as they have taught people to do for themselves and the king.[197] By supporting the Brāhmaṇa, the king gained higher merit than if he performed the Rājasūya or horse sacrifice.[198]

Terrible incidents are narrated about the princes who tried to resist priestly power. King Viśvāmitra was vanquished by sage Vasiṣṭha. Viśvāmitra had to surrender his crown and Kṣatriya power and acquire the powers of a Brāhmaṇa to contend with the sage.[199]

The wicked Veṇa who regarded the Brāhmaṇical rule of life contemptuously was dethroned and his son Pṛthu installed with the oath of revering the Brāhmaṇas.[200]

King Nahuṣa in pride at having defeated the Brāhmaṇas and their gods, braved and dared to harness the seers like horses, and made them drag his chariot. He even violated the sanctity of the Brāhmaṇas' body by kicking sage Agastya. For this he was cursed to become a serpent.[201]

Though these stories represent the tragic aspects we have instances of close cooperation between the two.

The true basis of kingly power is a combination of priestly power and the king's power.[202] Their union is perfection is the view reiterated in the epic.[203] It is said born of Manu were the priest, the warrior and other men then united the priestly with warrior power.[204]

It appears that the more Kṣatriyas enhanced their power the more than Brāhmaṇas monopolised exclusive privileges. By the time the Mauryan empire was established symbolising the climax of the rise of Kṣatriya power the Brāhmaṇas had established themselves as gods or deities on earth. Of course there is controversy regarding the lineage of the Maurya rulers. We do not intend to get entangled in it. It suffices here to understand that they represented the Kṣatriya characteristics of prowess in warfare and conquest leading to a consolidated empire with one king. Aśoka in his zeal to propagate Dhamma appears to have exposed the Brāhmaṇas who were considered deities on earth.[205]

The concept of being a god among man is reflected in Kauṭilya's writing as well.[206] Kauṭilya also seems to be partly mesmerised by the Brāhmaṇic myth of invincible strength, for he reflects:

> Royal power (Kṣatra) triumphs even without arms, and ever remains invincible when it is held up by the Brāhmaṇa, is sanctified by the counsels of ministers (Mantrins) and follows the percepts of Śāstras.[207]

The special prerogatives that the Brāhmaṇas had acquired of receiving gifts, not being taxed or harassed were upheld by the *Arthaśāstra*. The king granted lands to priests, preceptors, chaplains and all Brāhmaṇas well versed in the Vedas.[208] These grants were exempt from any tax and Brāhmaṇas were exempt from fines.[209] Whatever the offence, a Brāhmaṇa could not be tormented.[210]

Even while enumerating the share of inheritance Kauṭilya places the Brāhmaṇa above all other *varṇas*.

> Of sons begotten by a Brāhmaṇa in the four castes, son of a Brāhmaṇa wife shall take four shares, that of a Kṣatriya wife three shares, the son of a Vaiśya wife two shares, that of Śūdra wife one share.[211]

Even Megasthenes who was an ambassador to the court of Candragupta Maurya refers to the seven castes among the Indians. According to him too, "the philosophers are first in rank, but form the smallest class in the point of number. Their services are employed (privately) by persons who wish to offer sacrifices or (perform other sacred rites) and also (publicly) by the kings at what is called the Great Synod."[212] He too refers to the tax immunities of the Brāhmaṇa, "he who (gives sound advice) is exempted from paying any taxes or contributions.[213] The Brāhmaṇas were under no pressure to do any bodily labour or to contribute from their own produce.[214] However, the Brāhmaṇas remained close to the Kṣatriyas than

to any other caste, especially in the person of the *purohita*. Without analysing this aspect of the mutual relations between the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas, our study cannot be complete.

The esoteric and learned Brāhmaṇas, rigid yet flexible, conservative yet modern, dogmatic yet pragmatic, ultimately won through and secured their place next to the king as his prime guru, adviser and companion. The king, supported by the *purohita,* acquired sacred legitimacy, an aura and halo in the eyes of the credulous multitudes. We believe that the usual relations between the king and the *purohita* was one of amity and friendship, in fact, based on mutual respect for each other's powers. The development of this office of the *purohita* or domestic priest usually attached to a king or at times to, very rich and influential individuals in an institution peculiar to India.[215]

This institution dates back to as early as the Ṛgvedic times.

In this Veda it is proclaimed, "In his own house he dwells in peace and comfort to him for ever holy fool flows richly. To him the people with free will pay homage—the king with whom the Brāhmaṇa hath precedence."[216]

The *purohita* was capable of protecting the kingdom by his hymns, as Viśvāmitra protected the Bharatas.[217] Even from as early time as the *Ṛgveda,* the *purohita* came to be called the *rāstragopā* (protector of realm).[218] His importance can be gauged from the fact that he accompanied the king to battle to secure his victory by means of his prayers.[219] The *purohita* by performing sacrifices could avert calamities like epidemics and droughts.[220]

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* clearly insists that "the gods do not eat the food offered by a king who has no priest."[221] The most enlightening statement about the close association between the *purohita* and the king is expressed in the same text when, it is said: "The *purohita* is Agni Vaiśvānara with five missiles—one in his speech, foot, sky, heart and organ, with these he keeps enveloping the king as the ocean the earth. His kingship perishes not in its youth, life leaves him not before his time, up to old age he lives, he lives a full life, he dies not again and his people are in harmony with one aspect and one mind who had for a *purotiha* to guard the kingdom a Brāhmaṇa with this knowledge.[222] The significance of the Brāhmaṇa is well expressed when the *purohita* is alleged to be half of the self of the Kṣatriya.[223]

The *Śatapatha Brālumaṇa* echoes the same sentiments about the interdependence of the king and the *purohita.* That they should be brought together was considered the happiest condition. "It is quite proper that a

Brāhmaṇa should be without a king, but if he were to obtain a king, it would be conducive to the success of both. It is however, quite improper that a king should be without a Brāhmaṇa for that the king's work which is sped by the *purohita* only succeeds.[224]

It may be true that these extravagant claims for the *purohita* were put forward just to secure the Brāhmaṇa claims to power. But these theories must have got support because by the late Brāhmaṇa and Saṁhitā age the kings had almost lost all power of appointing and dismissing their *purohitas*. Any attempts by the kings to challenge the superiority were depicted as foolish attempts leading to their own destruction. "The Śṛñjayas, descendants of Vitahavija rose to such eminence, they almost touched the sky but after they had injured Bhṛgu they were overwhelmed."[225] When Janmejaya Parīkṣit ventured to do away with the services of the Kāśyapas he was compelled by the Asitamṛgas to employ them again.[226] Similarly Viśvantara Sausadmana was pressurised to reinstate the Syāparaṇas who "he had driven away from his sacrifice."[227]

Thus the picture that we get of the *purohita* as a force that the king had to reckon with was not the result of a day's work, their position was slowly sanctified and strengthened.

By the time of the Sūtras, we find that the responsibility of upholding the moral order of the world was shared by the learned Brāhmaṇa and the king.[228] The same is reflected in *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra* where it is declared, "If a Brāhmaṇa is appointed a *purohita*, there is prosperity."[229] Since without a priest to guide the king, the king's kingdom would come to distress,[230] vast knowledge and experience were a foregone conclusion. The qualities enumerated for the eligibility of *purohita*-ship were as varied and formidable as that of a king. The *purohita* should be of noble family, handsome, virtuous, of high character, of suitable age, eloquent and foremost in all sorts of transactions.[231] He should also be well-versed in religious and political knowledge (*dharma* and *artha*).[232]

As generations rolled by the ebullient Aryans came to be tamed and Indianised. They began to listen to the Brāhmaṇa whisperings that they alone could act as intermediaries between ordinary mortals and the gods because of their *tapas* or Brahmaśakti. In this process the king was promised divinity because he would be consecrated by the divine water after lengthy and complicated ceremonies by the *purohita*.

> The general trend is to show the prince and the state under the strings of the Brāhmaṇas. The royal chaplain (*purohita*) knew rituals which could either promote or retard the welfare of the king and the state.[233]

The general view is that Buddhists and Jainas were not complacent but condescending towards the Brāhmaṇas. However, the Buddhist and Jaina texts represent a different view of the position of the *purohita*. They regard them as one of the most important persons in the state. The *purohita* always belonged to the Brāhmaṇa caste endowed with virtues[234] and was usually selected from among the teachers, playmates, comrades, or classmates of the king, so that he may be always trusted and relied upon both in weal and woe.[235] The *purohita* was the *ācārya* or teacher, the sacrificial priest and the king's house priest.[236] He became the spiritual and temporal adviser of the king.[237]

From the reference in the Bandhanamokkha Jātaka[238] where a Bodhisatta was born in the family of the royal chaplain and succeeded to the chaplaincy it has been inferred that *purohita*-ship was probably hereditary. The concept can be refuted on the basis of the famous example cited in the Sīla Jātaka[239] where a virtuous man was preferred to a man of noble birth for the post of a *purohita*. This naturally points to the foregone conclusion that for committing any bad deed the *purohita* could be deposed by the king. A passage in the *Aitareya Brālmaṇa,* a Brāhmaṇical text also admits that a king could expel the Brāhmaṇa at will.[240]

Again the question remains whether this practice was actually followed. May be it depended upon the strong or weak personality of the king.

A Jātaka[241] agrees that the Brāhmaṇa *purohita* of good conduct was both the spiritual and temporal adviser of the king.[242] Such an adviser obviously had to be endowed with special qualities. The qualifications mentioned in Buddhist literature are similar to those enumerated in the Brāhmaṇical literature. The priest was presumed to be a clever man, knowing all omens, signs and dreams, able to interpret the signs of the earth, air and the stars.[243] Among his more important duties, he was the teacher (*ācārya*) the sacrificial priest and the house priest of the king.[244] It was his duty to bless the royal children at birth.[245] Being well versed in mystic rites, the *purohita* performed sacrifices to avert misfortunes indicated by a dream and predicted the good or evil of all undertakings connected with the movement of the stars.[246] The *purohita* led all the Brāhmaṇas, during a sacrifice it was his duty to invoke God's good will for the betterment of the king.[247]

In the temporal sphere the *purohita* is mentioned among the ministers of *amaccas* as the foremost minister. He was probably referred to as the *paṇḍitāmacca*. Unfortunately these books are silent about the function of the ministers.[248] The Jaina sources also corroborate this view to the extent that the *purohita* was awarded an important position in the king's assembly and was listed amongst the foremost seven jewels (officers of administration) of the king.[249] Historian Mehta opines that the *purohita* sometimes and certainly not casually, took part in the administration of justice.[250]

Thus, the main representation of the *purohita* during this age is one of spiritual advisor mainly concerned with the performance of expensive and complicated sacrifices.

According to Hopkins, the Hindu priests had no strength of combination capable of opposing sovereignty. They were dependent upon the king and looked up to the king for largesses and obtained wealth, cattle and later land. Only favoured Brāhmaṇas rose to eminence and stood under armed patronage.[251]

The concept was developed that wealth needed to be sacralised and without being consecrated through initiation wealth was not enough by itself. This process of sanctifying became the monopoly of the Brāhmaṇas. The Kṣatriyas eccouraged this because this ideology prevented the more opulent Vaiśya class with mere profane wealth from becoming a "dagger pointed at the Kṣatriya's power" always. The idea of inherent sin in the Kṣatriya *dharma* (already referred to earlier) necessitated the performance of sacrifice which again emphasized wealth. In fact the Śāntiparva[252] ordains that wealth was created for the celebration of sacrifice. Instead of using wealth for enjoyment it should be gifted, especially to Brāhmaṇas, for the gods cannot be pleased with wealth alone unless the Brāhmaṇas offer them.

Yudhiṣṭhira is enjoined upon "to celebrate a great sacrifice with enough presents (naturally for the Brāhmaṇas) of all kinds including sufficient quantity of earth's produce. If you do not perform that sacrifice, O king, then the sins of this kingdom will visit you."[253] Thus we find the Brāhmaṇa edging closer to the Kṣatriya throne.

By the time of the didactic epic we find the *purohita* with a niche for himself carved out: "Just as fire has no effect on water so the Kṣatriya can have no power over the Brāhmaṇa the ruler without his Brāhmaṇa adviser is like an elephant without its driver."[254] The king must have a good *purohita*, just and upright who understands the principle of desire and

gain and knows the true essence of things. Besides being conversant with sacred literature and possessed of virtue he should be eloquent and skilful in order to secure the king's victory and heaven.

The *purohita*'s main vocation was to gain (for the king) gain as yet ungot and to guard what had been already got. For this purpose a king was directed to get his family priest and abide by his directing and judgement. It was just a question of time. He became the confidant and closest adviser to the king.[255] Thus the *purohita* slowly claimed the exclusive right of singing hymns to the gods and performing sacrifice for the glorification of the king and hence became indissolubly attached to the king. The king at first could not later dared not, disobey him. Thus this was the step ladder to ultimately lay his hand upon the sceptre. He became the prime minister. This man's power originated in the secret council where his rhetorical and logical skill outshone that of the nobles and he awed the king with his religious authority.[256] Clearly the influence of the *purohitas* was increasing, by their special rights of guiding major ceremonies, administering the necessary sacraments, and modifying those beliefs which were flagrantly in opposition to the Brāhmaṇa theory.[257]

In spite of Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* being entirely secular, it could not ignore the predominance of the *purohita*.

He recommends that the king should appoint a chaplain who was very exalted in family and character, thoroughly trained in the Vedas with its auxiliary sciences in divine signs, in omens and in science of politics and capable of counteracting divine and human calamities by means of Atharvan remedies.[258] The main purpose of appointing a *purohita* was the supervision of sacrifices connected with domestic[259] or state affairs such as averting evils.[260]

The concept popularised was that the Kṣatriya power was made to prosper by the Brāhmaṇa, meaning, the chaplain, sanctified by spells in the form of the counsel of ministers, and possessed of arms in the form of compliance with the science (of politics), triumphs, remaining even unconquered.[261]

The multifarious duties of the *purohita* are well expressed in this passage: The *purohita* was connected with the worship of Indra, Gaṅgā, Parvata and Mahākācchapa in case of drought, of rats in case of rat menace, of snakes against snake menace, of Parvata against the menace of tigers and of *caityas* (funeral mounds or sanctuaries) against the menace of demons (*rākṣasas*).[262]

The *Arthaśāstra* assigns the day-to-day functions like offering prayers to Indra and Bṛhaspati to the Ṛtvik,[263] but the *purohita* was enjoined to preside on important occasions like the birth of a prince, the performance of the purificatory ritual.[264]

In grooming the prince, the future king, the *purohita*, played an important part. He was the person who could check the prince from doing wrong and evil deeds.[265] On certain occasions the *purohita* was the former *ācārya* or *guru* when the king was a prince. The frequent reference to *purohitācāryaśākhāḥ* probably indicates the close relationship between the king and the priest as also between the king and *ācārya*. The *ācāryas* being well-versed in the knowledge of the three Vedas often helped the king in discharging his duties.[266]

The *purohita* also on occasion taught the Vedas.[267]

Kauṭilya advises that the king should follow the *purohita* as the pupil does his teacher, a son his father or a servant his master.[268] This may not mean servile obedience on the part of the king because in the same text we find a reference proving that the king was not under the domination of the *purohita*.[269] It may just mean what Aśoka commands in his edict—Brāhmaṇas and Śramaṇas must be shown proper respect.[270]

Obviously the king would not be able to manage the affairs of the realm single-handed, especially with the establishment of large empires. One of the main advisers and coordinators on such occasions was the *purohita* who assisted in governing things and people.[271] An interesting method is mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra* about testing the loyalty of the officers in which the *purohita* participated: The king would order a *purohita* to teach the Veda to an unworthy person or to officiate as a priest at sacrifices performed by unworthy persons. The *purohita* would refuse and be publicly dismissed. The *purohita* would then approach ministers and other officials to incite them against the king. Anyone who was incited would be betrayed to the king and then the king would be able to take proper action against such a traitor.[272] Besides supporting the king in this role of a "spy" the *purohita* was a source of strength during an emergency like war. The *purohita* often accompanied the army to the battlefield and exhorted the soldiers to great deeds of victory by preaching that death in battle would lead them straight to heaven.[273]

We have already noted that the qualifications of the *purohita* necessitated a thorough knowledge of the *Atharvaveda* and astrology, since the art of battle was in part based on magical practices originating from the

Atharvaveda.[274] The natural corollary to this was good knowledge of astrology which must have been held in high esteem at that time.[275] The *Atharvaveda* rites were considered indissoluble in undoing the evil effects of demon's wrath on the country or on the people.[276] Now, considering the qualifications of the *purohita* and these duties the *purohita*'s importance cannot be exaggerated.

Kauṭilya even specifies an annual salary for the *purohita*.[277] Another source of their income was the *brahmadeya* land free of taxes given by the king.[278]

The political importance of the *purohita* can be further realised from the fact that *purohita* minister and commander were allotted special sites of the royal palace. However, Kauṭilya being an astute statesman warns the king against disloyal *purohitas* as well. He says that the *purohita*'s activities should also be watched.[279] In fact Kauṭilya classifies the discontent of the *purohita* as one of the internal troubles plaguing the kingdom and the remedies suggested are by means of *sāma* and *dāna*.[280]

In spite of this importance Kauṭilya surprisingly omits the *purohita* from the seven organs of the state, viz., Swāmi, Amātya, Janapada, Durga, Koṣa, Daṇḍa, and Mitra.[281] However, this may have been due to the fact that as R.S. Sharma points out "Brahmins as a class seen to have been covered by the term *amātya*."[282] H.C.Ray also poses a similar question: "Is it possible then that Kauṭilya regarded the *purohita* in the king's ministry as a representative of the Brāhmaṇas and Brāhmaṇic culture?"[283] He answers in the affirmative and expresses the feeling that the high qualifications required for the office gave it its importance.[284]

Daftari[285] has rightly said that the privileges granted to the Brāhmaṇas was for the benefit of society. According to him, they enabled the Brāhmaṇas to discharge their onerous duties. It was their duty to declare the law as it should be without being afraid of the kings and the Kṣatriyas. It was quite necessary for this that he should be exempt from punishment at the hands of the king. Otherwise it was very likely that he would be in constant dread of the king and would be unable to declare the true law. For the same purpose even today the legislators and judges are given special protection by the constitutions of civilised countries. The other two privileges are also intended to keep a Brāhmaṇa well supplied with money and give him an independent and easy living so that he may be enabled thereby to devote his undivided attention to his chief duty, the acquisition of and dissemination of knowledge and be enabled thereby to speak the

truth freely without being influenced by anybody upon whom he may have to depend for his livelihood.

The Relation between the Ruler and Kṣatriyas

"If we study the coarse, sensual, brutal, strife-loving blood hungry Hindu warrior; if we revert to the Vedic ancestor of this ferocious creature and see what joy in life as life is protrayed in battle hymn and cattle hymn we shall be ready to admit, I think that through the whole history of the Hindus from the early Vedic until the pseudo-Epic period, there reigned the feeling, in the larger class of the native inhabitants, that existence is full of life and reality."[286]

If we trace the birth and the growth of this caste, we find that early categorisation of the *varṇa* system did not prescribe specific occupations for the different *varṇas*. However, slowly the Kṣatriyas came to be associated with might, power and heroism.[287] A Kṣatriya was to be heroic, skilled in archery, sure of his mark and a mighty car-warrior.[288] The possession of force and power made the Kṣatriya more ambitious, war and battle became his strength.[289] The association of strength with the Kṣatriyas made the common people look up to them as protectors and maintainers of peace.[290] However, the crystallisation of the Kṣatriya caste as the warrior class probably began at the time of the later Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇas[291] and culminated by the Sūtra period.

With the expansion of the Aryans ceaseless fighting became the rule of the day. Aborigines were subdued, weak of petty tribes were merged into centralised kingdoms leading to the princes being "degraded" to the position of the nobles under powerful monarchs. Such kingdoms obviously needed a highly skilled standing army. According to Majumdar, such an army was composed of nobles and the chief armed retainers of the king.[292] These men came to form an exclusive class of fighters and in time became synonymous with the word *kṣatriya*.[293] With the advent of the Sūtra period, we find that the occupations of the different castes were fixed. In the Vedic period the word *kṣatriya* was restricted to the ruling class but with the concept of heredity gaining ground the Kṣatriya in general came to be denoted as a "warrior."[294] The warrior-nobles performed the functions of government. They constituted a genuine aristocracy sometimes wealthy sometimes not. The king usually belonged to this caste. The common Kṣatriyas probably were the soldiers and retainers of the king and nobles.

All the Kṣatriyas performed the prescribed occupations[295] of: studying the Veda. The Upanayana ceremony marked the beginning of this study. All Kṣatriya youths had to devote some years to Vedic study which was supposed to absolve them from the *ṛṣi* debt. They could not teach the Vedas. Performing sacrifices was another common duty. Here the Kṣatriyas had to seek the help of Brāhmaṇa priests, for the Kṣatriyas were not allowed to officiate as priests. For the same reason they could not perform sacrifices for others as well. Alms-giving was another important common duty. They probably bestowed alms upon the Brāhmaṇas for one of the exclusive privileges of the Brāhmaṇa was receiving gifts. Besides these the speical duties of the Kṣatriya were governing and fighting.[296] All martial occupations such as fighting, conquering and ruling were peculiar to the Kṣatriyas.[297] The Sūtras forbid the Brāhmaṇas and Vaiśyas from wielding arms and weapons except in emergency situations like protection of cows or saving the caste system or self-defence.[298] This left the military and administrative fields totally open for the Kṣatriyas.

There are references to non-Kṣatriya families following the vocation of arms.[299] Since they probably followed it regularly they came to be designated as Kṣatriyas, just as the Yavanas, because of their warlike attitude came to be described as born of Kṣatriya father and Śūdra mother.[300] This was probably the outcome of the theory that anybody following the occupation of arms was a Kṣatriya. Thus it can be presumed that by the Sūtra period the Kṣatriyas meant the military caste with the speical duty of fighting. N.K. Dutta also poses the question when the principle of heredity became stronger than the principle of occupation, and what became of the members of noble families who were crushed by vicissitudes of fortune occurring frequently among fighting communities?[301] Besides, as already alluded earlier, with the concentration of power in the hands of a few monarchs and subjugation of petty rulers many of the old nobles of Rājanya families came to be degraded socially. Similarly the more the king's power waxed the more the noble's prerogatives waned. Thus this class could no longer be regarded as members of the noble or ruling class but they still retained their hereditary caste name of Kṣatriya. These people naturally came to be employed in the military and administrative services.

Thus we find the Kṣatriyas broadly divided into the nobles or the ruling class and the common soldiers. Therefore an analysis of the relation between Kṣatriya vis-à-vis Kṣatriya has to allude to the correlation between the two groups.

The representative of the whole glory of the first group is the king. The other Kṣatriyas had to help the king in the discharge of his duties. These duties are briefly and poetically described in this passage:

> A king should imitate the spirited behaviour of Indra, the Sun, the Wind, Yama, Varuṇa, the Moon, Fire, and the Earth. As Indra rains all the four months of the rainy season, so he, observing Indra's rule of action, should rain his kingdom with desires, i.e., by fulfilling the desires, of his subjects. As the sun takes away water for eight months by his rays, in the same way he should take taxes from his kingdom. This is the Sun's rule of action. As the wind enters and moves through the living beings, in the same way he should enter all human beings by means of his spies. This is the Wind's rule of action. As Yama restrains at the proper time both the beloved and the hated, so he should restrain his subjects. That is Yama's rule of action. As every sinful man seen is ensnared by Varuṇa; in the same way the king should imprison all sinful men. This is Varuṇa's rule of action. He is the king observing the Moon's rule of conduct on seeing whom the subjects are pleased as much as men are pleased by seeing the full moon. He should show to sinful men his prowess and his sharpness and to sinful neighbouring kings he should be very ferocious. This is Fire's rule of conduct. It is the Earth's rule of conduct if a king supports all beings equally as the Earth does support all beings.[302]

Certain Kṣatriyas were raised to the position of ministers and apparently acted in embassies. The choice of these favoured ones depended upon noble birth, skill in the use of weapons, bravery, having knowledge of the sciences and whose ancestors also had served the king or his ancestors. These ministers were those who had been well-tested against treachery. These ministers were selected because if even an ordinary act is difficult to be done unaided, what then of governing the kingdom, the fruit of which is very great. With these Kṣatriyas the king consulted about ordinary peace treaties, hostility, matters about the army, treasury, town and country, income, protection and pacification of conquered territories. After having obtained the opinion of each of them separately and collectively the king did what suited him.[303]

The *Mahābhārata* also lays down that the king should appoint eight Kṣatriyas who are strong the skilful in the use of weapons, besides men of other castes to help him in the administration of the realm.[304] The responsibility of the government did not end with the security the king, and his ministers must promote ethical discernment (*trayī*), and the production of wealth (*vārttā*).[305]

In the chapter on the social conditions of this age we have seen that there was a weakening of kinship ties but simultaneously there was a development

of another very strong tie, that of allegiance, binding the retainer to his liege. "The king who is desirous of acquiring prosperity should always be served by followers, brave, devoted and not to be imposed on by enemies. They should be muscular and well-mannered, born in, and connected with, the respectable families of the land. . . ."[306] These men are the warrior nobles who form the faithful comitatus of the king. How important a position these nobles held can be gathered from the fact that the *Mahābhārata*[307] devotes an entire chapter to the discussion of how the king should treat these brave men of his court. The king should particularly guard against alienating them by indulging in anger and avarice. A discontented group of nobles is an endemic source of danger to the king and his kingdom. There is an eloquent description of the danger and disaster befalling a kingdom where the nobles are unruly and the princes are not strong enough to command their allegiance.[308]

During the early epic age the warrior was always a robber and pillager. This was their support. They often moved as bands of pillagers with one of them acting as the leader. With the establishment of walled cities the leader's role was probably transformed to that of the king and his supporters who helped him during the raids became the polished nobles.

The influence of these nobles of course depended upon their being well organised because the king would value their opinion if they presented a united front. Disunited they would spend their energy fighting each other. This probably led to the formation of warrior guilds. It appears the king had to consider the opinion of none other than his faithful comitatus. We find the humiliated and defeated Duryodhana lamenting his lonely existence and going back to his *gaṇamukhyaḥ* to tell them about his discomfiture.[309] These *gaṇamukhyāḥ,* seem to be just the leading nobles of the land.[310] The bond between the king and his comitatus is emphasized in Arjuna's fights with both Jayadratha's and Śakuni's nobles and warriors who wanted to avenge their lord's death at the hands of Arjuna.[311] Since in the *Mahābhārata* the poet's interest mainly centres around the prince the numerous deeds of self-sacrifice, of the valour of humble followers seeking to serve their prince as best as they could, probably have been omitted.[312] In fact the didactic epic emphasizes the duty of every warrior to stand by his comrade in arms no matter whether he is leader or not.

The king's court usually consisted of native nobles, royal allies, family connections and subject kings. Later the priests intruded into this council. These nobles took part in council, conducted the assemblies, led

the army and were the king's viceregents in all military affairs.[313] Thus we see that the noble Kṣatriyas were the real advisers of the king in all matters. The *sacivas* more often than not were of the military caste and were endowed with the most important duty of discharging the royal business in the absence of the king.[314] Sometimes a single responsible and trusted Kṣatriya could be selected to perform the king's functions in his absence while the rest of the members participated in the activities of the royal council. One of the most famous examples is that of Bhīṣma guarding the realm, during the king's minority.[315]

As the years rolled on, the office of the king's minister gained greater importance. The function of the Mantrī by the time of Kauṭilya encompassed the deliberative, administrative and ceremonial spheres. The king was supposed to consult the ministers individually and collectively. At joint sessions of the smaller and larger councils the king would usually accept the majority decision. However, the king had the discretionary power of acting according to his own will which would lead to the success of the undertaking.[316] The Mantrī took part in the selection of the Amātya.[317] He was in-charge of a special class of spies.[318] The minister also accompanied the king to the battlefield and encouraged the troops with his address.[319] The Mantrī had the responsibility of tiding over crises in the fortunes of the royal family resulting from sudden illness or death of the king by arranging for the perpetuation of the royal line. Among the ceremonial functions of the Mantrīs were attending the king's formal reception of envoys,[320] waiting upon him after he rose from sleep.[321]

The Jātakas also echo the same views about the importance of the Mantrī. The Amācca is entrusted with the restoration of ruined cities, with the construction of forts, with the command of the army and with superintendence of public works.[322] We find the Amāccas in the same role as in the Hindu texts, of supervising the state affairs in the absence of the king, deciding the question of succession, guiding the king's military policy.[323]

This relationship can be summarised in Kauṭilya's words[324] "The mantrins formed an entirely advisory body, the king was still free to use his discretion."

They held office because of the king's favour, and held it as long as the king pleased.

Finally, the Mantrīs did not form an organised body with fixed constitution.

Besides we do not find any evidence, however imperfect; of the minister opposing or debating the king's decision.

Kauṭilya enumerates certain eligibility norms for the selection of the Amātyas:

> A native of the country, of noble birth, easy to hold in check, trained in the arts . . . endowed with energy and power . . . upright, friendly.[325]

Considering the conditions laid down, we can safely conclude that either a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya held the position.

Although there appears to have been a combined domination of the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya, it seems that till the Mauryan period the principal role in the combine was that of the Kṣatriyas.[326] The extravagant lifestyle of the court with its fanfare of festivals, celebrations, dancing, gambling, jostling, all favoured the military nobles. The king could associate only with them in tastes and desires for they alone were socially equal to the king.

The above analysis shows the close realtionship between the high born rich Kṣatriyas.

Now the question is, what were the conditions of the poorer Kṣatriyas and their relationship with king and court. These members of the Kṣatriya caste had no wealth and usually served the king as common soldiers. Since the law-makers allow a person to live by the profession of the caste directly below in emergencies,[327] perhaps the poorer Kṣatriyas sought their livelihood by joining the Vaiśya caste. Thus a warrior could become a trader,[328] but he was forbidden to practice usury and others were forbidden to exact from him more than three per cent interest a month. However, at times he was permitted to lend money to barbarians and sinners at a high rate of interest. The Kṣatriyas could revert back to their caste occupations as soon as they were able to support themselves by it.[329]

Besides being employed with their own king, Kṣatriya soldiers had begun to serve cities not their own, for pay.[330] The common soldiers, unable to bear the expense of cars or good arms were retained by the king or lords and were graded according to their virtue and personal dexterity and ability in certain arts of war. Thus there was a change in the composition of the army from early Vedic times. The Vedic army was a rudimentary one consisting of only two divisions—*patti* (foot-soldiers) and *rathin* (car-warriors).[331] By the time of the epic we find the

army consisting of,

> Chariots, elephants, horses, infantry, burden carriers, ships, spies with local guides--these are the open limbs of a fighting force, O descendant of Kuru.[332]

The foot-soldiers were probably drawn from all sorts of people including foreigners. In the infantry it was quantity rather than quality that counted.[333] However, Manu lays down that those Kṣatriyas are to be preferred who come from the same districts noted as the homes of the most respected Brāhmaṇas. The king should select tall and little men.[334] The fort or *durga* was considered as the best defence, because a bowman placed on its rampart could give fight to a hundred men.[335] Therefore these soldiers also ranked among the favourite soldiers. The infantry holds a special place in the epics.[336]

In the pre-epic period the position of the common soldiers was not so well defined. It may be inferred that since battle was more in the form of light skirmishes the soldiers were not part of any standing army, a foregone necessity for heavy squadrons. The source of income was probably a part of the booty and when not engaged in one of these border skirmishes he probably mingled with the common people. With the epic period their position became consolidated and well organised. Now they had an identity of their own as part of the standing army of the king and drew their salary from the king as a fixed income.[337]

Among the other divisions of the army the chariot hero held in fact the most important position. "The knight in his chariot is equal to an army." Frequently we find thousands running from one mounted hero. In case of a national hero, of course, no bounds are set in description. Through fear of Arjuna, everybody, even the knights, fled; the horse-riders abandoned their horses, the elephant-riders their elephants—falling from war cars, elephants and horses.[338]

We have observed earlier that soliders were graded according to merit. This obviously implies an elaborate system of training.[339] We find Rāvaṇa commanding his Senāpati "Hero! order my four-limbed army which is well trained in military arts to defend the city carefully against the enemy."[340] The Mahābhārata alludes to military tournaments and formal jousts where the Kṣatriya knights had to prove their skills and prowess before being knighted. Droṇa tested the skills of the Kaurava and Pāṇḍu brothers in one such tournament when they had finished their training and had reached the end of boyhood.[341] The many-faceted training is well

summarised in this passage:

> They are experts in climbing, riding, quick march beating, entering and coming out of a fort, and their skill in fighting on elephants, in horsemanship and charioteering has been tested.[342]

The Kṣatriya king was enjoined upon to see to the welfare and well-being of his warriors. The soldiers usually drew their salary from the king and were cared for when disabled. There are many dissertations warning against the disasters of non-payment of salaries.[343] In fact Hopkins[344] points out tht the regular wage had to be paid in advance but the soldier is not free, on the strength of this support, to devote himself to civil businesses. His life had to be free of business affairs. Thus during peace time the soldier probably amused himself and did nothing.

Megasthenes[345] also supports the idea:

> The soldiers or fighting men, who, when not engaged in active service, pass their time in idleness and drinking. They are maintained at the king's expense and hence they are always ready. When occasion calls, to take to the field for they carry nothing of their own with them but their bodies.

The *Mahābhārata* also echoes the same concern for keeping the soldiers happy when it refers to the system of granting an extra allowance in advance to army personnel on the eve of an expedition and also provision for the families of soldiers dying on the battlefield.[346] Another important prerogative of the soldiers was that they were practically exempt from taxation. This freedom was justified negatively by two facts: the servants of the king were not taxed and the members of the military caste were servants of the king. Secondly since the soldiers were not protected but did protect, it was considered unfair to tax them as it would erode the very basis of taxation which was bartered in return for protection.

Besides these remunerations the soldier "who obtains possession of chariot or horse or elephant or private personal property or cattle or women or the base metals, possesses them as his own."[347] The concept of the war booty of Vedic times is reflected here. However it was modified to the extent that the soldier had to give the king choice of goods.[348] The king had to share with all the soldiers that which had been captured by no one in particular.

By the time of Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* the development of a complete military system with complex military techniques, strategies, armaments and secret weapons was established. According to the *Arthaśāstra*, the army

consisted of six classes of troops—Maula-bala, Bhṛtaka-bala, Śreṇi-bala, Mitra-bala, Amitra-bala, and Aṭavi-bala.[349]

Kauṭilya further states that some of the conditions for the excellence of an army are that

> it should consist mostly of Kṣatriyas inherited from forefathers, constant obedience, the sons and wives of the soldiers being satisfied, not disappointing during marches, unobstructed everywhere, able to bear all troubles, skilled in the science of all types of wars and weapons, fought many battles, having no other interest because of the prosperity and adversity shared with the king.[350]

The relationship between the king and the warrior is aptly described when the king says, " I receive a wage like you; this kingdom is to be enjoyed together with you, the enemy should be attacked by you at my request."[351]

The custom of the soldiers being maintained by the state treasury was continued. A foot-soldier was paid five hundred *paṇas* while the sacrificial priest, the preceptor, the minister, the chaplain, the commander-in-chief, the crown prince and the king's mother received four thousand eight hundred *paṇas*.[352] There is, however, controversy among scholars whether this large sum was a monthly or yearly payment.[353] The warrior was further encouraged by the announcement of both monetary and spiritual rewards. One hundred thousand *paṇas* was the prize for killing the enemy king, fifty thousand for killing the commander-in-chief or a prince, ten thousand for killing a foremost warrior, five thousand for killing an elephant or chariot warrior, one thousand for killing a horseman, one thousand for killing a chief of infantry, twenty for a head (of infantry) besides double wage and whatever one seizes.[354]

The spiritual reward related to the code of chivalry, when a soldier was indoctrinated with the idea that death in the battlefield was the best death for a Kṣatriya because attainment of heaven is the promised reward of the brave soldier. "Sweet it is to die in battle, the path to heaven lies in fighting."[355]

The rules of fighting for the Kṣatriya were in the highest degree noble and humane. The military code makes a near approach to modern international law regarding warfare. The moral law forbade the use of weapons against those not actively engaged in battle, or those who retired from the fray, who were unarmed or disabled or who pleaded for mercy. Camp followers and sleeping soldiers were also protected. A warrior could fight with another who was similarly armed and he must not poisoned

weapons. He must always give due notice of his intention to strike.[356] A more detailed description of some of the rules is given below.

A warrior in armour should not fight a Kṣatriya without a coat of mail.[357]

The fight should be between equals, e.g., a cavalryman should not attack a car warrior.[358]

Poisoned arrows and barbed arrows should not be used.[359] If a soldier was benumbed, helpless or defeated he should not be pierced by an arrow.

Non-combatants who conceal themselves in fear or who were mere spectators should not be killed.[360]

A suppliant enemy who had laid down his arms should not be killed. Prisoners of war should be treated well. The women prisoners also should be treated courteously till they were sent back home after a year.[361]

One with open hair, one who had turned one's face against one's opponent, who was in folded palm, without arrow, without armour and one whose weapon was broken, and a Brāhmaṇa, should not be killed.[362]

The sick and the wounded should be looked after.[363]

In case of insufficient supply of recruits in a division or divisions substitutes may be used.[364]

The latter day Purāṇic texts prohibit the seizure or destruction of enemy property except under dire necessity. Religious places, the properties of onlookers and private individuals were to be exempted from destruction in war.[365]

Striking below the belt was considered obnoxious.[366]

War itself should be avoided when possible, and to engage in hostilities only when attempts at peaceful settlement had failed.[367]

At the height of the conflict the warrior seems to have used anything he could get his hands on: iron clubs, spits, knives, swords, arrows, darts, axes, iron balls, wheels, staves, cow-horns, mortars, lances, even trees, dirt, stones, fists, and teeth.[368] Often the use of these primitive weapons and inhuman fights have been referred to represent epic society as a savage society with traces of cannibalism.[369]

The rules of conduct were probably not strictly followed, for we find Karṇa blaming, Arjuna for attacking him while he was busy with the wheel of his chariot. Ulupi blamed Arjuna for attacking Bhīṣma by treachery.

The victorious prince stood as a preceptor to the others who repesented the disciples: "When a great Kṣatriya prince, after having overcome another Kṣatriya in war, and having captured him sets him free, he becomes the latter's preceptor."[370] The prince who accepted king Jarāsandha's suzerainty "waits upon him as his disciple."[371] In relation to the people, the king was probably like a father but to his feudatory kings he was a *guru* or preceptor.[372]

The relation of the king as chief of the Kṣatriya to his army was quite close. The king personally supervised all that concerned his forces. Every day the king inspected the business of his chariots, arms and armaments.[373]

The king probably divided his command with the officers. Sometimes the force was divided. This brings us to the different battle arrays. We hear of such arrays as *sūcī* (needle-shaped), *krauñca* (in the shape of a heron), *śyena* (hawk array), *makara* (crocodile-shaped), *maṇḍala* (circular), *vajra* (thunderbolt array) and others.[374] In each of these arrays the king's positition was different. Sometimes he was in the most sheltered place sometimes ensconced among troops. The king was to exhort and inspire his soldiers while in battle array, by personally supervising their conduct during the fighting.[375] The officers with whom the king shared power were probably the highest officer of the army, the Senāpati and the commandant of each unit such as Pattipati, Senāmukhanetā, Gulmanāyaka, Gaṇanāyaka, Vahinipati, Pratanapati, Camūpati, Anīkinīpati, and Akṣauhiṇīpati.[376]

The king's headship of the military administration is taken for granted in all our sources. Kauṭilya specially enjoins upon the king to review the four wings of the army in the seventh watch of the day and to consult the commander-in-chief of military affairs in its eighth watch.[377] The Senāpati whose predecessor was the Vedic *senānī* was the head of the military branch of the administration. The importance of this office can be judged from the Jātakas where it was the normal rule for the king with two sons to appoint the elder as *uparājā* and the younger as Senāpati. The Jātakas do not give us much detail about the Senāpati's military functions. On the other hand, we find him engaged in civil functions, may be over and above his military functions.[378] We find the Senāpati acting as regent or deciding judicial cases. Inspite of the high status, the massacre of the Senāpati with all his sons, treacherously, at the instigation of the king on mere suspicion of treason proves the precarious position of even the highest officials.[379]

By the time of the *Arthaśāstra* however, we find the Senāpati, in a more secured position. The three main officers in-charge of the army were the Senāpati, Praśāstā, and Nāyaka. They were graded I, II and III respectively in the king's civil list.[380] Their distinctive status is also indicated in the respective quarters assigned in the camp, namely, the second, third and fourth divisions around the king's quarter. The Senāpati probably enjoyed the same prerogatives as the princes or Kumāras. That the king's security was of the greatest importance can be understood from the fact that on striking the camp the Nāyaka marched in front and the Senāpati in the rear with king in the middle.[381] The Senāpati had to have complete mastery over the art and practice of warfare and apply this to direct the four wings of the army.[382] The Nāyaka was probably in-charge of the campaign arrangements.[383] The Praśāstā probably managed the sappers and miners. During battle marches he with his carpenters and the *viṣṭi* (water-carrier) probably marched in front to prepare the roads and ensure proper water supply.[384] Other important officers were the Mukhyas and Adhyakṣas.

All this points to the development of a comprehensive military system with the supreme Kṣatriya (king) related to the other members of the fighting class. However, it may be rightly questioned, that in an age of imperialist state bent on conquest and annexation could all the members of the military class be Kṣatriyas? May be not. In all probability, members from other castes too were selected as soldiers and generals. We have references of Alexander having besieged a "city of Brāhmaṇa." The defenders of the city fought with vigour for sometime.[385] Puṣya-mitra Śuṅga was the Brāhmaṇa commander-in-chief of the last Maurya King Bṛhadratha. In ancient literature also we find allusions to Brāhmaṇas acting as generals and Senāpatis. Nobody can overlook the famous Brāhmaṇa general of the *Mahābhārata,* Droṇācārya.[386] In a Jātaka we are introduced to the Brāhmaṇa commander-in-chief Jotipāla, the son of the *purohita* of the king of Benares. He was renowned for his great mastery and skill in archery.[387] The discussion by Kauṭilya on the relative value of Brāhmaṇas, Rājanya (Kṣatriya), Vaiśya and even Śūdra probably signifies that they were actively involved in the military organisation of his time.[388] However, Kauṭilya himself prefers a purely Kṣatriya army.[389] The preference for the Kṣatriya warrior in the earlier period has already been discussed before.

A few words about the offensive and defensive weapons would be appropriate before we conclude this discussion. Dr. Chakravarty[390] has

given a critical account of ancient India's arms and armour, tracing their origin, whenever possible, to the Vedic times. To name a few offensive weapons: Sword (*Pralhāraṇa*), Arrow (*Ibu*), often of iron, Bow (*Dhanu*), made of bamboo and sometimes of animal horns, Spear (*Śakt*), made of iron also referred to as *Kunta*, Mace (*Gadā*), Battle-axe (*Kuṭhāra*), wielded by the nobility, Discus (*Cakra*), *Yantra*—a revolving weapon, mad of iron or steel, *Śataghnī*, a hundred killer, a rocket usually placed at the walls and gates of forts or fortified towns.

Some of the defensive weapons were: Shields (*Āvaraṇa, Carma*), Body armour (*Varman, Kavaca*), Neck-protector (*Kaṇṭhātraṇa*), Shooting glove (*Hastāvāpā, Aṅgulitrāṇa*), and Helmet [(of metal) *Śirastrāṇa*].

This analysis of the Kṣatriya position cannot be complete without at least a rudimentary mention of the republics. Here also we find the Kṣatriyas at the helm of the political institutions. The term *saṁgha* or *gaṇa* in its wider sense is applied to a mass of inert matter as well as a multitude of human and divine (or semi-divine) beings and which in its human application is sub-divided into many species, such as the religious, the economic, the military, and the political.[391] It is the political *gaṇa* or *saṁgha* which were used as synonyms for republic and Kṣatriyas were connected with it.[392]

The Kṣatriya tribes organised as *saṁghas*. The political power was concentrated in the hands of those families who were eligible for regular coronation (*abhiṣeka maṅgala*). These were probably the descendants of the pioneer Kṣatriyas who had settled on land and founded the *janapada* or state. They treated their political sovereignty as an exclusive privilege which they transmitted in their families from generation to generation. The Kṣatriyas of the *saṁgha* called themselves *rājās*. The head of each family probably bore this title and that is why we hear "*gṛhe gṛhe hi rājānaḥ*."[393] The *Arthaśāstra*[394] also corroborates this when *saṁghas* are spoken of as *rājā śabdopajivinaḥ* meaning the members of these assumed the titles of *rājā*. This was the reason probably which led certain authorities to suggest that the Licchavis comprised 7,707 *rājans*.[395] The names of certain famous clans are the Śakyas, the Koliyas, and the Mallas, Allakappa, the Kalmas, the Videhas, etc. Pāṇini also refers to *saṁghas* as *ayudhajivin*, meaning those who subsisted by the profession of arms.[396]

Thus from the above discussion of Kṣatriya relationship from the Vedic nobility to the Mauryan monarchy, we can safely conclude that there was a subtle but sure change in the social structure of the country, leading to

the predominance of the Kṣatriyas or the warrior class who were entrusted with the defence of the country.

His Relation with Other Castes

> The Brāhmaṇa is the chief, for he is created from the mouth (*mukha*) the Kṣatriya is vigorous because he is created from vigour, the Vaiśya is meant to be consumed as he is created from the stomach, and the Śūdra is to be the transporter of others being created from the feet.[397]

This *śloka* enlightens us about intercaste relations aptly. TheVaiśyas from the beginning appear to be created for "consumption" meaning taxed. Since they represent the common people generally engaged in the profession of cultivation and trading they created the wealth necessary for "feeding" the other castes. Probably the close relation of Vaiśyas with food production activity led the Śāstrakāras to relate their origin to the stomach and consumption. The term "Vaiśya" originally occurs in the Ṛgvedic Puruṣasūkta hymn of the *Ṛgveda* where the Vaiśya is supposed to originate from the thigh of the primeval being.[398] However, *viś* meaning the common people, is frequently found.

Indian society was divided into four principal *varṇa*s: Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, and Śūdras. Though the word *varṇa* literally means colour, the three upper classes were not distinguished from one another by the colour of the skin. The concept grew because originally the fair-skinned Aryans despised the dark-skinned non-Aryans. The first three castes belonged to the same cultural and social community, while the Śūdras formed a distinct group not entitled to study the Vedas and perform the Upanayana. The performance of the Upanayana ceremony was considered like the rebirth of a person and was usually undertaken before one entered the life of studenthood. Thus the first three castes came to be known as Dvija,[399] or twice-born and the Śūdras were Ekajātyaḥ[400] or once born. The first three *varṇa*s were also designated as "Ārya"[401] by certain writers.

During the early Vedic period the caste system was in a very fluid state. There was no attempt to determine one's caste according to birth or even occupation. The famous hymn of the *Ṛgveda*[402] where a *ṛṣi* sings, "I am a poet, my father is a physician, my mother a grinder of corn. With our different views, seeking after gain, we run as after cattle" is oft quoted to corroborate the flexibility of the caste system at this age.There were no specific restriction on intermarriage between the Aryans. Since the people by complexion, feature, language and creed were homogeneous there is

no mention of one caste being more pure than the other. Social intercourse between all the three was free from any taboo. Rules restricting connubium and commensality are also almost absent from the *Ṛgveda*. The Ṛgvedic people including the Brāhmaṇas were fond of meat-eating and animals were slaughtered during a sacrifice or to entertain a distinguished guest.[403] This Ṛgvedic society has been very eloquently described by Max Müller:

> There is no authority whatever in the hymns of the Veda for the complicated system of castes, no authority for the offensive privileges claimed by the Brahmins; no authority for the degradation the position of the Śūdras. There is no law to prohibit the different classes of the people from living together, from eating and drinking together, no law to prohibit the marriage of people belonging to different castes, no law to brand the offspring of such marriages with an indelible stigma.[404]

Thus we see that there was a close relation between all the three castes in the early ages. In fact we do not find the Kṣatriyas as a distinguished class of warriors proud of their dominion, supremacy, power and might in this age. The later day distinction between the military and non-military castes is not visible in the *Ṛgveda*. On the other hand we find that all freemen were active participants in warfare and followed the custom of bearing arms during emergencies.[405] But this idyllic condition did not last long and man became the slave of his passions, greed for power and sense of superiority combined with factors like the extension of Aryan power leading to close association with savage races, the rise of polygamy, etc. led to the crystallisation of the caste system. By the time of the law-books the major distinctions, between the ruling classes on the one hand and Vaiśyas and Śūdras on the other hand was complete. The Vaiśyas included the agriculturists, cattle-raisers, traders and artisans. Farming and herding were monopolised by them and became the representative occupation of the Vaiśyas.[406]

The seeds of this subtle and surreptious effort of segregate the *viś* or the common people can be seen in harmless—Seeming proclamations in the early texts as well. It is stated that the gods Indra and Agni delighted to live in their own houses or in that of a Brāhmaṇa or a *rājan*.[407] The other castes are not mentioned, showing the segregation of the people from the upper two castes. The *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* in explaining the use of certain types of wood for the ladles of the new and full moon sacrifices, mentions, "So doing the priest puts both the Brahmā and the Kṣatra above the Viś."[408]

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* clearly sets the Kṣatriya above the Vaiśya in associating the Kṣatriya with milk and the Vaiśyas with *surā*.[409] The same text also mentions "Kṣatra presses hard on the people, whence the wielder of the royal power is apt to strike down people."[410] The *Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa* reflects upon the close association of the Kṣatriya and Brāhmaṇas against the people who were slowly getting bracketed with the Śūdra. The text refers to certain lauds being utilised to bring vigour and strength into the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas and turning the Viś into subjects of both.[411] Various rites[412] are mentioned which could make the Viś subservient and obedient to the Kṣatriya, especially like those performed during the Soma[413] sacrifice, the Jyotiṣṭoma sacrifice[414] and others. Since the Vaiśyas were also allowed to perform the *yajñas* there was the omnipresent fear of them gaining superiority by performing the sacrificial rites in the reverse. Therefore to guarantee Kṣatra supremacy the Brāhmaṇical texts forbid the performance of the reverse rite.[415]

Since the Vedic kingship was usually hereditary the Kṣatriya ruling families formed a hereditary ruling class. The elections of kings though rare, must have been also limited to a few ruling families of the tribe and never open to the community at large. In a monarchical state thus developed a distinction between the people of royal blood and the vulgar commoners. In an oligarchy also the political power must have been concentrated in the hands of a few ruling families.[416]

Thus the condition of the Vaiśya became one of a "tributary to another to be eaten by another, to be oppressed at will."[417]

The distinction between the castes came to be reflected in minor details specified for each caste. The three *varṇas* were associated with the three different Vedas. The Brāhmaṇa with the *Sāma,* the Kṣatriya with the *Yajur,* and the Vaiśya with the *Ṛg* Vedas.[418] Even for performing sacrifices different seasons were allotted to different castes—A Brāhmaṇa should sacrifice in spring, a Kṣatriya during summer and the Vaiśya in the rainy season.[419] Keeping with the same trend the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* prescribes the Gāyatrī metre for the Brāhmaṇa as it leads to brilliance and splendour, the Kṣatriyas are credited with Triṣṭubh for gaining force, power and strength. Finally the Vaiśyas had to be conversant with the Jagatī as it confers cattle.[420] Even the sepulchral mounds were different for each caste. For a Brāhmaṇa the mound had to be as high as to reach up to the mouth, as high or a man standing with arms raised above his head was the size

mentioned for a Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya's mound should be as high as the thighs and for the Śūdra upto the knee.[421]

These rights and privileges became more stringent with the advent of the Sūtra-śāstrakāras. By now specific duties were ordained for the different castes and there could be no interchange unless in an emergency or calamity. All the Dvijas were allowed to study, sacrifice and give alms or gifts. The waivers given to each caste were a Brāhmaṇa could officiate at a sacrifice and receive gifts besides the above mentioned common duties. The Kṣatriyas could indulge in governing and fighting. The Vaiśya's list included besides the above mentioned duties cultivating, cattle breeding, trading, lending money on interest.

The above mentioned religious rites differentiating the castes became more stringent and widespread. Different seasons were thought right for the initiation of different castes. "Let him (*guru*) initiate a Brāhmaṇa in spring, a Kṣatriya in summer and the Vaiśya in autumn?"[422] The Brāhmaṇa student was to be initiated in the eighth year, a Kṣatriya in the eleventh and the Vaiśya in the twelfth.[423] Such minor details of distinction could be discernible in all spheres of day to day life. Inter-dining and intermarriages were slowly becoming a taboo. The close association of the Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas was degenerating and the four *varṇas* came to be distinguished by their very origin and particular sacraments.[424]

The Buddhists, though they tried to preach the equality of all castes, at times could not mask their preference for the two upper castes.[425] The Buddha emphasized deeds in place of birth as the basis of distinction. This of course allowed a closer association between the castes. In fact the Uddālaka Jātaka states that Khattiya, Brahmin, Vessa, Sudda, Caṇḍāla, and Pukkusa can all be virtuous, self-restrained and can attain *nirvāna*.[426]

We have noted above that the Vaiśyas, inspite of belonging to the same Aryan stock and considered Dvijas came to be regarded condescendingly by the Kṣatriyas, their relationship being limited to being the protector and the protected. In fact it was almost a contractual relationship of the king's promise to protect and in return to be remunerated with taxes.

In the early Vedic period the gods were asked to compel the subjects of the king to offer some contribution to ensure stability. This was the *bali* or the love tax.[427] With the expansion of the Aryans' border skirmishes and forays gave place to proper campaigns making warfare more eleborate and

costly. The king now settled in a fortified town with his courtiers. The army and the court of idle nobles given to extravagant amusements needed wealth for support. This meant more burdens of taxes on the people. With the establishment of territorial states the king had a definite area to defend. This gave security to the people. They no longer were obliged to retire daily to the mud-built fort for protection from barbarians. They therefore spread themselves over the land in open ranches or half defended villages to protect which, outposts of soldiers were set up.[428] New forts were built so new towns developed and all this naturally meant more expenses which could be met only by increasing and formalising the burden of taxes.

Generally one-sixth of the corn produced was given as tax to the king.[429] In fact one of the standing epithets of the king is *ṣaḍ bhāgin* or one who gets one-sixth. Any man who after keeping one-sixth part for taxes gifts part of his harvest to a Brāhmaṇa is released from all his sins.[430] Gautama lists the percentages of various taxable commodities: one-fifth of cattle, one-twentieth of merchandise, one-sixteenth of honey.[431] Hopkins, basing his concept upon the epic relates that taxes in cattle, grain and merchandise were levied in kind. Besides custom house duties, "a piece in kind" for the king was exacted of merchants besides the apportioned duty they surrendered.[432] Manu also enjoins similar regulations regarding taxation of cattle, grain, flesh, perfume, etc.[433] The king could raise taxes only on settled occasions and here too the rate of taxation was limited to one-sixth, at times one-eighth, and one-tenth. However, the Śāstrakāra makes provision for raising the tax to nearly twenty-five per cent in times of need just to ensure better protection.[434]

By the time of the *Arthaśāstra* the sources of the king's revenue were very much widened. Kauṭilya includes *kośa* or revenue as an important constituent of the state. In a passage, Kauṭilya considers *kośa* as the source of the army, both being essential instruments for the acquisition of dominion.[435] The close association between the warrior and the producer of wealth becomes obvious here. In another statement Kauṭilya says that all state undertakings depend upon the *kośa* hence in view of its importance the king himself must attend to it.[436] Like all other authors Kauṭilya also reaffirms the importance of the three items of taxation: land revenue, the tax on artisans and tax on traders. The land revenue was at times supplemented by the levy of irregular cesses. This burden was again passed on to the villagers who often paid in the form of forced labour for civil or military purposes. The artisans paid the taxes according to payment every

month, fixed service or levy in cash. The tax upon the merchants *śulka* was very comprehensive and to some extent complicated. Varied rates were levied, varied officers were recruited to enforce this tax. Kauṭilya also mentions two important revenue officers Sannidhāta and Samāhartā. The former kept the accounts of state revenue and expenditure for many years in retrospect and the latter prepared financial estimates for the current year.[437]

Even to a foreigner like Megasthenes it was quite obvious that the agriculturists and husbandsmen (the components of the Vaiśya class) were correlated to the Kṣatriyas by the law of protection, tenancy rights and taxation. According to him,

> The second caste consists of the husbandsmen, who form the bulk of the population and are in disposition most mild and gentle. They are exempted from military service and cultivate their lands undisturbed by fear. They never go to town either to take part in its tumults or for any other purpose. It therefore not infrequently happens that at the same time and in the same part of the country men may be seen drawn up in array of battle and fighting at risk of their lives, while other men close at hand are ploughing and digging in perfect security having these soldiers to protect them. The entire land is the property of the king and the husbandsmen till it (on condition of receiving one-fourth of the produce) for a rental in addition to paying a fourth part of the produce.[438]

Of course there is controversy among scholars about whether the Vaiśyas were tenants paying a rent or were the real owners paying tax as a price for protection. Besides, the payment of a fourth instead of the commonly declared sixth, part of the crops as tax is also questioned. We need not go into the details of these controversies. It suffices here to understand the relations between the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya caste. The entire state machinery was dependent upon the wealth produced by the people.

From the above summary of the varied taxes, we notice that they were all drawn from the third estate or the people caste, or the Viś or the Vaiśya. All of them however rich or poor had to pay taxes. Not so with the soldiers and the priests. The *Mahābhārata* while discussing the matter of taxation, in detail, speaks only of the Vaiśyas as the people to be taxed. Since the reason for taxation was the necessity of protecting the taxpayers this naturally exempted the warriors from taxes.[439] Even Megasthenes, states that philosophers were exempted from paying any taxes[440] or contributions and none of the military also paid any tax.[441]

With regard to the Kṣatriya's attitude towards the Vaiśyas, we find a

marked tendency to make the taxes as considerate as circumstances would allow. It was urged that taxes should be light so that the Vaiśyas might have resources to improve the agriculture of the land and develop the trade.[442] Many similes are used to explain how mild the king should be: "Little by little should an annual tax be taken from the realm as the leech draws its food little by little."[443] The king may gradually increase the burden on his subjects like a person gradually increasing the load on a bullock.[444] The king should so ordain the taxes that both he and the workman may mutually obtain an advantage.[445]

We find an interesting passage that illustrates wise statesmanship and appreciation of the contribution of the Vaiśyas in statecraft. This passage relates to an appeal for a loan from the people by the king in an emergency:

> There is grave danger facing us in all nakedness. The enemy wants to ruin us but will in turn be ruined by your help. For your protection I require funds which are returnable after we have got over the danger. If, on the other hand, the enemy gets possession of this land he will deprive you of your property, and even of your wives and sons. To avert this you must cooperate by lending me a helping hand. But in this let there be no violation of the accepted canons of taxation. By your help again I shall be protected. What is the use of treasure if it were not used in times of great crisis?[446]

The king is continuously warned against being unnecessarily harsh or oppressive. The king should not tax the rich merchants so much that they leave the realm. If there is drought and consequently, poor crops or none at all, the king should expect little in taxes.[447] Even when the king conquers a new tribe he should demand only the normal just taxes but if the people show their unwillingness then only they should be forced.[448] The Buddhist Jātakas as well as a number of important Brāhmaṇical works counsel the king against fines and taxes that are too harsh. However, over leniency is also warned against. Though the revenue the king collected was, in a sense his "wage," it was also his royal prerogative justified by *dharma*.[449] The king had to always remember that when he receives taxes it is his duty to protect, the people, if the people suffered any losses. The burden of sin lay on the king for failing to perform his duty.[450] Such a king went at once to hell.[451] His protection of the people gave him a sixth of the realm's virtue.[452]

A type of paternalism is conceived here. The theorists of kingship and law did conceive of the king's authority as that of a father—probably less to emphasize the despotic authoritarian aspect of the father's role

but more to symbolise his duty to sacrifice for the welfare of those dependent on his protection. The monarch seized happiness only if his subjects were happy. His character should be an example.[453] Gentleness towards the subjects was enjoined. Among the punishments the king should first use *vāgdaṇḍa* then *dhigdaṇḍa*. *Dhanada* and *vadhad* only if the preceding is insufficient. Only in extreme cases all four may be used.

Thus only during economic needs do we find the Kṣatriyas coming closest to the Vaiśyas, for socially they kept aloof. Hopkins feels that the warriors mingled with the Vaiśyas not by preference. Such associations were held with the mutual understanding that such union was temporary and tolerable only on the grounds of expediency.[454] However, a study of the Jātakas leads B.C. Sen[455] to conclude that the dominant feature of public gathering was its frankness and intimacy.

> Men of varied castes and classes often meet together at the invitation of their king, jostling where aristocratic distinctions lost their sharpness.

This was not due to the king's personal instinct of social life. But the compulsions of the age required public opinion to be consulted on a wide scale.

Politically we find the Vaiśyas or the common people closely associated with the king whenever there is mention or election of kings and popular will. Whether kingship was elective in ancient India is a question still unanswered. Of course there are references in early texts like the *Ṛgveda* where it is said, "Like subjects choosing a king, they, smitten with fear, fled from Vṛtra."[456] The *Atharvaveda* also suggests,

> let thine opponents call thee, any friends have chosen (thee) against them; Indra and Agni all the gods have maintained for thee security in the people (Viś).[457]

About the king-makers the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* suggests, "The metres act as attendants about him (Soma); even as the non-royal king-makers the heralds (Suta) and headmen *(grāmanī)*, (attend upon) the king so do the metres act as attendants upon him (Soma).[458]

Some scholars like Geldner do not consider these passages as representing elections. R.C. Majumdar, however, feels strongly that election as a concept was known to the ancient Indians.[459] He further quotes from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* to explain his thesis: "Thou (the king and Indra) art Brahman! Thou art Indra, mighty through the people (or he whose strength is the people) i.e., the Maruts in the case of Indra, and the subjects or peasantry in that by the King."[460] We are inclined to agree with

Majumdar on the basis that since the caste system was not stringent during the Vedic period and the number of people in the clan also must have been less, therefore the people may have been involved actively in selecting their king.

The Jātakas furnish us with many instances of popular involvement. On the death of an anonymous king of Gandhāra, a prince from Magadha was elected by the joint will of the citizens and courtiers of Takkasila.[461] The Cullasutasoma Jātaka refers to a king directing his people to elect a successor.[462] The revolts mentioned in the Jātakas represent outbursts of popular feelings.[463] In the Khandahala Jātaka we find the people put the priest to death and with sticks and stones hurry to kill the king.[464]

Thus, though the Kṣatriyas tried to raise themselves above the commoners by finding a strong ally in the Brāhmaṇa caste, they could not really ignore the power of the common mass. Among the common mass were the Vaiśya caste who were, as we have noted, economically strong, therefore inspite of the alliance between the temporal and the sacerdotal powers, due respect had to be paid to the general people.

In the *Mahābhārata* the people gather to question the selection of Puru in preference to his elder brother. The people consent only after being satisfied with the explanation offered by Yayāti, Pūru's father.[465] Similarly the people objected to Devāpi being consecrated because he was afflicted with a skin disease, probably leprosy.[466]

By the time of the *Arthaśāstra* this active participation of the people declined. There is no mention of a popular election system. However, even Kauṭilya warns against dereliction of duty on the part of the king towards his subjects. A king had to take measures to counteract causes of decline, greed and disaffection arising in the subjects.[467] If the subjects are poor he says, they become greedy and greed leads to disaffection and these unsatisfied subjects may either go to the enemy's side or revolt against their own king.[468]

Thus we find that though the Kṣatriyas tried to ignore the Vaiśyas by claiming social superiority, at heart they knew that the common people were a force to contend with. In fact with the prosperity of the Vaiśyas the ruling caste felt threatened, therefore they combined with the Brāhmaṇas in proclaiming that wealth by itself was never enough. The economic factor must be sacralised until no amount of profane wealth can provide access to authority. This ideology would prevent the more opulent Vaiśyas from becoming a threat.[469]

A paternalistic attitude was slowly developing, culminating in Aśoka's proclamations. In the second Kaliṅga Edict, Aśoka remarks that his interest in his people is that of a father in his children.[470]

Whether the Vaiśyas or people were part of the organisation of bureaucracy we do not find enough evidence. In the Dharmasūtras there is hardly any mention of the caste of the Amātyas except a passing reference in the *Āpastamba* that the men of the first three castes should be appointed to protect the people in the towns and villages.[471] The Amātyas (members of the bureaucracy) play a vital role as companions, councillors and generally of the king in the Jātakas.[472] Unfortunately there is no specific mention of the caste of these Amātyas. Mehta feels that the repeated mention of the term *amāchakulam* precludes the possibility of the lower class people becoming ministers.[473] Since Hopkins drew attention to the twenty-one rich Vaiśya Amātyas out of thirty-seven,[474] scholars have given too much importance to it as showing involvement of the lower classes. However, we must remember that this passage is not found in the critical edition of the Śāntiparva brought out by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute of Poona. Here a word about the *grāmanī* seems imperative.

> Its Pāli equivalent namely *gāmanī* is celebrated in a few Buddhist cononical texts which describe the high rank and the life of luxury enjoyed by this officer.[475]

We may conclude that the *gāmanī* may have belonged to the Vaiśya caste. In the most important prerogative of the Kṣatriyas, the right to bear arms, the Vaiśyas at times did intrude, especially during emergencies.[476] Kauṭilya supports an army of Vaiśyas and Śūdras on the basis of their numerical strength but he too expressly prefers an all Kṣatriya army.[477]

Thus the contact between the Kṣatriya and the Vaiśya considering the different lives they led was not continuous and easy. The religious connection which bound the lower classes to Brāhmaṇas was totally absent between the Kṣatriyas and them thus a strong line of demarcation grew.

> We know that when asceticism became a popular form of religious expression the Vaiśya function and the gṛhastha ashrama acquired a prestige more in line with its true social significance.[478]

The Śūdras are mentioned for the first time in the Puruṣasūkta[479] hymn in the *Ṛgveda*. Here they are supposed to originate from the two feet of the primeval being. Later texts also offer similar concepts about the origin of the Śūdra:

. . . Śūdra is to be the transporter of others, being created from the feet.[480]

The Śūdras are always portrayed as below the three *varṇas*. It is declared nobody is complete except a Brāhmaṇa and a Kṣatriya[481] and these two castes contain the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras.[482] We have already noted that the Śūdras were called the Ekajātyaḥ[483] being denied the right to the Upanayana.

In the early Vedic period we find that Vedic learning was open to all members of all the *varṇas,* i.e., Brhāmaṇas, Rājanyas, Śūdas, Svaws and Cāraṇas.[484] Though intermarriage between the Dvijas were not prohibited during this age, marriage alliances with Śūdras were probably not appreciated. But kings and nobles must have had irregular connections with the Śūdras. Kings and nobles probably kept a number of slave girls as concubines because we find king Traśadasyu gave fifty slave girls as *badhus* to the sage Sabhari Kaṇva.[485]

With the extension of the Aryan influence the Śūdra helots were now used by daring pioneering individuals to clear land. Wholesale enslavement of the native Dāsa or Śūdra population was changed and a new policy of accepting Śūdras as subjects (or serfs) was adopted.[486] Once the ruling class acquired a large number of slaves and serfs, they slowly withdrew from all professions requiring manual labour, and the generation of a spirit of contempt for the industrial arts led to these arts being consigned to the Śūdras.[487]

The increase in the polygamous spirit, especially among the ruling class, and the easy acquisition of female slaves brought a large number of Śūdra women in close association with the Kṣatriyas.

The Dharmasūtra gives us two terms *jātyutkarṣa* and *jātyapakarṣa*[488] which means moving up and down the social scale respectively. Thus a Kṣatriya continuously following the avocation of a Vaiśya and a Śūdra, in the fifth or sixth generation becomes a Vaiśya or a Śūdra.[489] This is corroborated by the Buddhist text where such movements up and down the social scale must have been much easier.[490] The *Majjhimanikāya* holds all the *varṇas* to be same.[491]

Though the Buddhist texts consider all the four castes equal, while describing the duties we always find the Śūdra portrayed as a servant.

Brahmins he made for study; for command he made the Khattiyas, Vessa plough the land, Suddas the servants made to obey the rest. Thus from the first went forth the Lord's behest.[492]

The *Majjhimanikāya* relates, ". . . the Śūdras live on the use of the sickle."[493]

Thus by the Sūtra period we recognise the Śūdra as a serf without any security of tenure. With the establishment of the temporal and spiritual power, the Śūdras were not permitted to practise austerities.

> The study of the Vedas was totally forbidden to the Śūdras. The penalty for hearing and reciting the Vedic hymns was to cut off the tongue. A Śūdra could not be present in the halls of sacrificial ceremony. The Śūdra was at the mercy of the whims and fancies of the twice-born castes. He had practically no right to his property. They could not even aspire to the simple practices of human dignity. He had to satisfy his needs with the discarded food and clothing of others. He could never be released from the condition of servitude to others for this was his natural state.[494]

The majority of them were very poor. We have an example in Punna of Rājagṛha, who worked from morning till night including holidays.[495]

Hopkins[496] says that the Śūdra should be regarded in two lights—one as the representative of his caste irrespective of his master. Here he was the abject slave of the twice-born. Contact with this man was unholy and polluting. On the other hand, we see the Śūdras as a settled servant of one master in whose house he was perhaps born. Though the position here is better the fact of his slavery and lowliness is a permanent stigma from his caste.

As long as the Śūdra maintained a respectful demeanour towards the Dvija, he was not concerned. However, in case of his insulting a Dvija, death and torture must be his part. In his master's house the master took care of his needs. He advised him and bestowed on him whatever as of no use to him. The master had the right of punishing, but only as in the case of son and wife. Like any servant the Śūdra represented his master in business matters. Though a Śūdra had no legal property rights, his master's duty was to support him according to his needs. This meagre property, if stolen, had to be returned and the Śūdra was enjoined not to acquire much property. In theory all property belonged to his master. Though the Śūdras' existence was no better than a slave, his wife and daughter were treated as respectfully as those of the upper castes. Though his legal privileges were few he could seek redress if his wife or daughter was molested by one of the upper castes and a heavy fine was imposed upon the offender. He himself could demand justice if there was injury to his personal character. There is distinct mention of Śūdra as teacher when others fail and also chances of

becoming the king showing that at times he rose above his abominable status.

The *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* indicates that since all subjects received protection in return they had to perform certain duties. The Śūdra should work one day each month for the king in place of monetary taxes.[497] The Śūdras' position in relation to the Kṣatriya can be gauged from the penances ordained for murder. For killing a Kṣatriya the guilty man had to maintain the normal vow of continence for six years, for killing a Vaiśya for three years, and for killing a Śūdra for one year only.[498] The *Baudhāyana* increases still further the vow of continence for the Kṣatriya, but not the Śūdra. He lays down for the Kṣatriya nine years, for the Vaiśya three years and the Śūdra one year.[499] Even the penalty or fine varied according to the *varṇa* of the harmed person. For slaying a Kṣatriya one had to give one thousand cows, for slaying a Vaiśya one hundred cows and for murdering a Śūdra ten cows with a bull in every case.[500] If a Śūdra committed adultery with a female member of the first three *varṇas* he was put to death.[501] But if a member of the three upper *varṇas* committed the same crime, he was to be banished.[502] Among the minor sins are mentioned, serving the Śūdra, begetting a son from a female of the Śūdra *varṇa*.[503]

We have already noted that the Śūdras were socio-economically, backward which was further aided by the fact that even in inheritance, in the case of issues by different wives, four shares went to the issue of the Brāhmaṇa wife, three to the Kṣatriya, two to the Vaiśya and one to the Śūdra wives respectively.[504] Vasiṣṭha says if a son of a Brāhmaṇa shall receive three shares, of a Kṣatriya two shares and others shall divide the rest equally.[505] He further states that the Śūdra should be regarded a member of the family but not an heir.[506] Thus the Kṣatriyas were gaining wealth while the Śūdra was poverty-stricken.

This was the reason probably which led the upper castes to indulge in polygamy on the strength of their wealth, whereas the Śūdra could afford only one wife. This is well summed up by Sharma,

> while the rule of polygamy for the members of higher *varṇas* seem to be in line with their better economic status, the monogamy of the Śūdra is in keeping with his unhappy economic situation.[507]

We have seen that Śūdras earned their livelihood mainly by serving others or by the mechanical arts. Now the question arises could they rise above this? No Śūdra was ever regarded fit to be appointed as royal officer.[508] In the early ages all free men were allowed to bear arms[509] but

with the passage of time this right was also withdrawn from the Śūdras. Manu says even during emergencies this right could be extended to the Brāhmaṇa and Vaiśya but never to a Śūdra.[510] This was, maybe, because of the legitimate fear that being numerically strong, the latter might turn their arms against the state. Guru Droṇācārya's *gurudakṣiṇā* of Ekalavya, the Niṣāda boy, thumb, probably points to the same apprehension of the Śūdra who if armed may overthrow the Kṣatriya.[511]

About recruitment in the army, B.C. Law,[512] points out that the recruits to the military regiment of a kingdom or a territory were not necessarily all Khattiyas. Kauṭilya also refers to an army consisting of Vaiśyas and Śūdras on the strength of their numerical strength.[513] However, he ultimately prefers an all-Kṣatriya army. Śūdras were probably recruited as menial servants in the army who worked as attendants of the soldiers.[514] Thus we may conclude that the Vaiśyas and Śūdras probably took up arms in emergencies but certainly were not part of a standing army.

With the social gulf between the higher and lower classes increasing, sexual relations with Vaiśya and Śūdra women were discouraged. The children born out of such unions were grouped under the mixed castes. Children begotten by Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas from females of the next lower, socond lower and third lower castes become Ambastas, Ugras and Niṣādas, respectively. Children of women wedded in the inverse order of the castes were the Āyogavas, Māgadhas, Vainas, Kṣattris, Pulkasas, Kukkutakas, Vaidehakas, and Cāṇḍālas.[515] Kauṭilya also echoes similar list of mixed castes.[516] These children born of the Anuloma and Pratiloma marriages certainly would not have held a high status in society. Thus we find that though endogamy was encouraged and was sanctioned Śūdras came in contact with the higher caste through marriages. Kauṭilya feels that the origin of Pratiloma marriages is due to the king's violation of his duties.[517]

Hutton has given a fresh interpretation for assigning the offspring of the union of a Śūdra man and a Brāhmaṇa woman to so degraded a position. He says this was probably because of the confronting of an indigenous matrilineal tradition by a patrilineal invading people. A child of a matrilineal father and a patrilineal mother would have status and kinship on neither side and find himself in a highly anamalous position. Where the two systems meet the matrilineal usually gives way to the patrilineal.[518]

Thus it becomes evident that with the entrenchment of Aryan power there was a total assimilation and subjugation of the indigenous Śūdra

population. They came to be fragmented into subcastes and the variety of Śūdra functions and occupations tended to weaken class cohesion. By the time of Smṛti literature we find the Śūdras further fragmented into clean and unclean Śūdras. Thus the Śūdras could never really unite under one banner and revolt aganist the Kṣatriyas or any other caste. On rare occasions we find the Śūdras held high court offices and had to be described as retainers enjoying status not without honour. Certain Śūdra families probably had a hereditary right to the office of steward or royal charioteer.[519]

With the development of a highly centralized bureaucracy a large public sector in mines and industries, a large standing army, a large docile working force became imperative. This was supplied by the Śūdras. Thus the whole edifice rested on the work of Śūdra helots in state farms and in the public sector, helots who were denied everything but the minimum amount possible for food, shelter and clothing.[520]

Other Occupations

The pre-eminence of the nobles, the warrior, is everywhere projected. The Kṣatriyas, endowed with physical force and destined to undergo the fatigues of war, had their origin in the shoulders and arms of Brahmā. The various theories of the origin of this caste invariably attribute the qualities of strength and might to the Kṣatriyas.[521] There is a constant association of unassailable and unvanquished power and strength with this fighting class and regular prayers were offered to maintain them.[522] These qualities are well summed up in the description, that a Kṣatriya was to be heroic, skilled in archery sure of his mark and a mighty car warrior.[523] Even the most popular deity of the early Aryans was the great warrior Indra. The main sacrifices undertaken by the Kṣatriyas namely the Rājasūya or royal consecration, Vājapeya meaning the drink of strength in a rejuvenation ceremony, and Aśvamedha or the horse sacrifice, all had a military connotation and typified the unity of Kratu or intellect, and Kṣatra or arms, to suppress the others.

This constant association of strength, might and power obviously implied that the Kṣatriyas were principally engaged in fighting. Their main occupation appears to be the protection of the people and the country from internal revolts, as well as from external aggression, and the maintenance of peace.[524] This development probably was the result of conjunction of various causes over a period. In fact there is nothing to

indicate that a separate warrior caste (the latter day Kṣatriya) had been formed with distinctions between military and non-military in the early period. It was still the custom for all free men to bear arms for the state in times of necessity.[525]

It was perhaps the expansion of the Aryans towards eastern India with its resultant fights and conquests leading to the fusion of small principalities and the emergence of centralised kingdoms, that necessitated a separate warrior class. The standing army of a monarch was probably selected from the nobles and chief armed retainers.[526] Radhakrishnan has aptly stated that this class of nobles and retainers with fighting qualities and sturdy valour came to be known as the warrior caste whose chief duty was to defend society from external aggression and internal disorder.[527] This prestige of knightly courage was naturally widespread and very tenacious in the war-like age of constant expansion. Therefore in the course of time temporal power came to be vested in the Kṣatriya hands. The Kṣatriyas regarded themselves as the organisers of justice no less than as the possessors of physical power. Thus to rule became the duty of the Kṣatriyas. The texts of the period also support this, for a Brāhmaṇa is considered unfit for kingship leaving it for the Kṣatriya alone.[528] This supreme authority is lucidly expressed in the story where it is stated that when a Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya (meaning a member of the Kṣatriya caste) and Viś decided to consecrate themselves they had to ask for land from the Kṣatriya (the ruler) and the Kṣatriya for his own sake had to pray for land from the sun, the divine lordly power.[529]

Thus the Kṣatriyas besides being the king, were mainly engaged in the profession of warriors, royal officers, commanders, ministers all connected with the royal office.

As warriors they were probably part of the standing army maintained by the monarchies. We say part of the standing army because though the Khattiyas were warriors par excellence, the recruits to the military regiments of a kingdom or a territory were not necessarily all Khattiyas.[530]

Both Brāhmaṇical[531] and Buddhist[532] texts bear testimony to the Kṣatriyas earning a living by the use of weapons and protection of the people. Kauṭilya also agrees with this when he states one of the excellences of an army is that, "It should consist mostly of Kṣatriyas inherited from forefathers.[533] Megasthenes corroborates this view by grading the Kṣatriyas as the martial race or fighting class forming the fifth caste among his seven castes and holding the second place in numbers.[534]

The soldiers probably received some kind of remuneration and there was also a kind of widow pension in existence.[535] The soldiers were encouraged in various manners. It was inculcated that the best death for a Kṣatriya was in the battlefield.[536] The bard and panegyrists sang of attainment of heaven by the brave soldiers. In fact Kauṭilya as we saw, offers a regular, graded plan of monetary rewards—starting from one hundred thousand *paṇas* for killing the enemy's king, twenty for each head of infantry, besides double wages and whatever one seizes.[537]

Important state offices were held by Kṣatriyas. The organisation of the bureaucracy which was an important instrument of the state apparatus was probably represented by the term *amātya,* in the Saptāṅga theory of the state. These Amātyas played a vital role as companions, councillors and generals of the king. An examination of the references to the *amacchas* suggest that they were occasionally Brāhmaṇas and frequently Kṣatriyas.[538] There is no case of *gahapati* or artisans acting as the minister of the king. The *Āpastamba* also states that the men of the first three castes should be appointed to protect the people living in town and villages.[539] From the same source, we learn that the king's court should be adorned by pure and truthful Āryas who were to act as counsellor of the king.[540] The term "Ārya" is probably rightly interpreted as the members of the first three *varṇas*.

According to Kauṭilya the Amātyas constitute the highest service cadre from which the Purohita, Mantrins, Samahartā Sannidhāta, officers in-charge of the harem, ambassadors and the superintendents of some thirty departments were to be recruited.[541] A close study of the qualifications, like noble birth expressed as father or grandfather being Amātyas, Abhijana and Janapadodbhijataḥ[542] reveals that there was no scope for anybody other than the upper two castes[543] for fulfilling the requirements. That the avenues to the higher bureaucracy were beyond the reach of the lower castes is exemplified in Megasthenes's writing as well. In his opinion, the professional class of the councillors and assessors monopolised the highest executive and judicial posts.[544]

The three classes of royal officers such as Ratthikas, Pettanikas and Bhojakas seem to mostly represent the Khattiya class.[545] *Suhṛt* or ally being an important organ of the state the post of the ambassador, *dūta* was of special significance. This officer also had to belong to the aristocratic family, Kulinam and had to be devoted to the duties of a Kṣatriya, *kṣatradharmarathah*.[546]

The key post in the army was that of the Senāpati whose appointment was also usually confined to Brāhamaṇa or Kṣatriya caste.[547]

The formalisation of certain important occupations as the monopoly of certain castes was achieved only by the Sūtra period. In the early period, as Sharma[548] points out, the process of differentiation in social and economic sphere was very slow, as in the time of the *Ṛgveda* and hence it is not easy to say, anything clearly about the source of income of the Kṣatriyas for they hardly had any fixed or regular source of income.

During this period, the main source of income for the Kṣatriya appears to be the booty and spoils of war, especially in the form of cattle.[549] The concept that Vaiśyas were meant to be consumed was probably most applicable in the early period for the Kṣatriyas were economically supported by them. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[550] clearly says that the *viś* is the food of the Kṣatriyas. The offering of *bali,* a kind of love-tax was in vogue then.[551]

By the time of the Sūtras the members of all the castes were placed under restrictions in adopting occupations of their choice; and in most cases they had to follow those occupations which were hereditary to their families. As already noted, teaching and priesthood were the hereditary occupations of the Brāhmaṇas.[552] The Kṣatriyas took up military service and administration of territory as hereditary occupations.[553] For the Vaiśyas trade, agriculture, cattle-breeding and lending money at interest were the hereditary occupations.[554] To the Śūdra's care fell the handicrafts and menial service as hereditary occupations.[555] The Dharmasūtras further stress that the study of the Vedas, offering sacrifice, and giving alms are the lawful occupations of a Kṣatriya along with the other three *varṇas,*[556] and a similar concept is reflected in Buddhist literature as well.

> Brāhmaṇas he made for study; for command he made the Khattiyas, Vessa plough the land, Suddas the servants made to obey the rest. Thus from the first went forth the Lord's behest.[557]

Now the question arises that was the choice of the craft strictly regulated by caste? We get certain interesting information to the contrary, giving us a glimpse into the diversification of occupations from the standard law.

The famous story of the rivalry between Vasiṣṭha and Viśwāmitra shows Viśwāmitra the king, relinquising his crown and Kṣatriya power to attain the position of a Brāhmaṇa so that he could contend successfully with Vasiṣṭha.[558]

Kṣatriyas are also seen engaged as lute-players during a Aśvamedha *yajña* by a king.[559] However, here to the Kṣatriya sang about the king's wars and the victories in war[560] true to his ebullient nature. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* clearly distinguishes the duties of a Kṣatriya minstrel from that of the Brāhmaṇa. The former recites of war and strife thus carrying on the heroic stories. The Brāhmaṇa is concerned with tales of sacrifice and gifts.[561] The epics testify to the bardic accomplishments of Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa. Duryodhana was also well-acquainted in this art.[562] The court minstrel had a recognized position at the court and he was not looked upon as a mere enconomist. Probably it was the Kṣatriya minstrels who sang the ancient tales of Purūravas, Nahuṣa and Yayāti, kings who declared the superiority of the Kṣatriya or warrior over all others including the priests. With the great war came centralisation of power and the smaller kingdoms lost their power, position and identity. This perhaps led to the disappearance of many old centres of court minstrelsy. In addition the new rulers at the new centres were probably not interested in the old stories as they did not belong to any ancient powerful dynasties. Thus the songs and stories of the warrior minstrelsy were no longer highly prized and slowly the priestly class with their moral and religious ethics began to usurp the position.[563]

According to N.K. Dutta[564] because of the high standard of efficiency reached during the Maurya period special class of clerical experts were needed. Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas usually were engaged for that. As these Kṣatriyas were divested of their military service it is possible they were despised by the other Kṣatriyas.

The law-books permit a Kṣatriya to live by other professions in times of distress. A Kṣatriya is allowed to earn his livelihood by adopting the normal occupations of a Vaiśya, in times of distress.[565] Trade was usually the profession adopted by the Kṣatriyas in such trying times. However, the law-books prescribe a number of restrictions and injunctions to be followed by a Kṣatriya while engaged in trading. Articles like stones, salt, hempen, cloth, silk, lines, and skins were prohibited for sale by the Kṣatriya.[566] The Kṣatriya were not allowed to trade in dyed cloth.[567] There was a total ban on the selling of prepared food, flowers, fruits, roots, perfumed substances used for flavouring (food), water, juice extracted from plants, *soma,* poison, flesh, milk, iron, tin, lac, and lead[568] by the Kṣatriyas.

The limited number of articles that the Kṣatriyas could trade in included animals having teeth in one jaw, as well as minerals, excepting salt and

undyed thread.[569] The best suited item for trade by the Kṣatriyas appears to be weapons. Probably because of the training received by the Kṣatriyas in the use of weapons and arms they were considered adepts in clinching deals in this business.[570] In the Jātakas we get references to Kṣatriyas in the capacity of traders paying duties and taxes like any other trader.[571]

The system of lending money at interest was an established practice in the days of the Sūtras. In fact it was a prescribed occupation of the Vaiśyas and Kṣatriyas followed it in times of difficulty. Here too the law-books lay down certain specifications on the rate of interest to be charged by various *varṇas* for lending money.[572] The Kṣatriyas like the Brāhmaṇas were barred from lending money like a usurer,[573] for a usurer was considered a sinner. Both the Kṣatriyas and the Brāhmaṇas were allowed to lend what was sold by weight taking eight times the original value on repayment. It is stated that a Kṣatriya could lend money at a normal rate of interest to one who neglected his sacred duties, to a miser, to an atheist or to a very wicked man.[574] According to strict rules as soon as the calamity or distress passed over a man had to resort to his normal hereditary profession, should perform a *prāyaścitta* and should abandon the wealth acquired by the "improper" means of engaging in another profession.[575]

According to the commentator Haradatta, it is implied in the Sūtra[576] that all the three higher castes might earn their livelihood through priesthood, teaching and acceptance of gifts in times of distress, though actually these occupations are a monopoly of the priests in normal times.

Here we should remember that the kingly class in all civilized communities is a cultured body. India was no exception and we find them actively involved in hymn-making in the early Vedic period.[577] However, in the period under study the Brāhmaṇas succeeded in gaining exclusive monopoly over this field and shut the Kṣatriyas out almost totally. Fortunately the new science of Upaniṣad or metaphysical speculation provided new avenues for the creative Kṣatriyas during this phase.[578] Thus we have famous Kṣatriya teacher-philosophers like Ajātaśatru of Kāśī, Aśvapati of Kekāya, Pravahana Jaivali of Pañcāla, and Janaka of Videha.[579] Non-Brāhmaṇa teachers are also alluded to in the Dharmasūtras.[580] It was not uncommon for princes to live in retirement in old age and lead an ascetic life in the forest. Thus a great sage[581] may be such a prince for all we know. In the *Arthaśāstra* we get the referencce that the Kṣatriyas of Kamboja,

Saurāṣṭra and other countries lived by agriculture, trade and profession of arms.[582]

This kind of intermingling of caste occupations is reflected in the Buddhist Jātakas as well. Here we have the instance as already noted earlier, of a Kṣatriya, a king's son apprenticing himself successively in pursuance of a love affair to a potter, a basket-maker, a florist and a cook.[583] Another prince resigns his share in the kindgom in favour of his sister and turns a trader.[584] Similarly we find another Kṣatriya going to live with a merchant and earn his living "by his hands."[585] Though a Kṣatriya lives by his bow and arrow it is not usual to find a noble taking service for a salary as an archer,[586] which we find in the Jātakas.

Thus we find the Kṣatriyas participating in occupations other than that of a warrior and earning a living. The law-books[587] lay down that a man becomes an owner of property by inheritance, purchase, partition, conquest, or if he finds it lying somewhere. These were common to all the castes. However, each caste had their exclusive privileges of earning. The additional mode for the Kṣatriyas of acquiring property was conquest in which booty was collected. The Kṣatriyas were certainly not very wealthy. There is mention of about a score of monarchs whose wealth consisted mainly of land revenue which was supplemented by other dues and perquisites. The Pāli canonical texts often speak, of the Khattiya Mahāsālas meaning the rich nobles but their percentage was small according to the time and place.[588]

From the evidence available for the Mauryan period we can assume that the Kṣatriyas or warrior caste was maintained by the king. While the solider was away in the field his family was looked after by the state treasury. We get an idea about the amount received in remuneration from the reference in the *Arthaśāstra* which states that five hundred *paṇas* was paid to the foot-soldier, forty-eight thousand *paṇas* to the preceptor, sacrificial priest, the minister, the chaplain, the commander-in-chief, the crown prince and the king's mother.[589] There is of course a difference of opinion about whether it was a monthly salary or a yearly reimbursement. Kauṭilaya feels that this huge amount was paid to keep these personages happy and satisfied and avoid revolts and instigations.[590] The Greek author Arrian also reflects a similar view. He states that the pay which they received from the state was so liberal that they could with ease maintain themselves and others.[591] Megasthenes also supports this concept of easy life when he says that in times of peace the military caste gives itself upto idleness and amusement.[592]

Thus it appears that though fighting was ordained as the chief occupation of the Kṣatriyas not all Kṣatriyas were engaged in the activity. The general living standard was not very high though of course the aristocratic class especially those close to the palace and court tried to imitate the royal lifestlye. The royal soldiers and favoured Kṣatriyas led an easy life.

Royal and Aristocratic Lifestyles

Food and Drink

Food in India has received divine sanction. The attention to food in Indian religious theory indicates that philosophy is rooted in some basic realities of life. In the Upaniṣads and Brāhmaṇic epics it is said,

> From food verily creatures are produced . . . food is the chief of beings.[593] The course of the world and the intellectual faculties have all been fixed on food. . . . It is food that keeps up the wide universe.[594]

In later Upaniṣads it is held that food is life.[595] Since food was intimately connected with Indian life, with the increasing importance of the *varṇa* system food and drink also began to receive a social significance.

To trace the history of eating habits a glance at the type of food prevalent in the early Vedic age becomes inevitable. The principal ingredients of food of this period were barley, rice, wheat and milk. Barley receives its due recognition in the *Ṛgveda*[596] and the Saṁhitās.[597] It is true rice and wheat are mentioned in later literature[598] but we can probably infer from this that they were prevalent in the early Vedic period as well.

In the Brāhmaṇas many items of food are mentioned. They can be broadly categorized as food meant for consumption by humans and food for offering as oblation to gods in sacrifices. Words like *dhāna karambha, parivāpa, purodāśa, pṛthukā, saktu, laja, masūsya,* and *karambha,*[599] all relate to some form of rice and barley. Fried barley cooked with butter was called *dhāna,* fried rice was also termed *dhāna. Karambha* was the powder of *dhāna* fried with butter. Parched rice fried in butter formed *parivāpa* and a simple rice cake was *purudāśa.* Pṛthuka probably means flattened rice also termed *chipitaka.* Fried rice powder was called *saktu.* The description of *laja* fits puffed rice or that which looks like "blooming flower." *Masūsya* may have been a famous paddy that grew in north India. *Karambha* probably represented fried rice and barley mixed with butter.[600]

Priyaṅgu taṇḍula mentioned in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*[601] probably refers to a particular variety of paddy which was golden in colour. Most of these forms of rice and barley are commonly available in modern India. The difference is only in the designation or name.

Cattle being an important possession of the Aryans, milk obviously formed an important part of the diet. Mention of various milk products also can be traced in the literature. Some of them are *dugdha, ājya* or melted butter, *āmikṣā* or curdled milk, *dadhi* being the curd, *vājin* was whey, *karambha* probably represented a type of porridge, *ghṛta* was unmelted butter.

Navanīta meant cream or fresh butter.[602] Certain combinations are also referred to. The most famous being the mixture of milk and *soma*.[603] *Caru* was another product of mixing milk, curd, honey, butter, etc.

The Ṛgvedic people including the Brāhmaṇas were fond of meat-eating. During all important ceremonies or sacrifices slaughter of animals was common. In fact god Agni is described as "fed on ox and cow."[604] Another passage mentions Indra will eat thy bullocks.

> . . . Fifteen sacrificers then prepare a score of bullocks for me, and I devour the fat thereof, they fill my belly full with food.[605]

We hear of sage Agastya slaughtering one hundred bulls at a sarifice.[606] The later *ṛṣis* and priests probably felt ashamed to find that the sage Yājñavalkya, the greatest philosopher of his time, was fond of eating the flesh of milch cows and bullocks as it was tender.[607]

Usually sterile cows, ox, goat and sheep were the favourite varieties of flesh enjoyed by the people without any qualms of stigma. That beef formed an important part of the diet can be easily understood from the fact that Māṁsastaka an essential part of the Śrāddha ceremony could not be performed without the necessary ingredient, the flesh of an ox.[608] It was customary to feed the guests with flesh of animals.

> A large ox or he-goat is to be slaughtered when the king or a Brāhmaṇa comes to the house as guest.[609]

Similarly the meat of an ox or a barren cow was prepared to entertain a king, *"Rājñe va brahmanaya va mahokṣam va mahajam va pacet,"* or any venerable person who came as guest.[610] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* clearly lays down that the flesh of goat and cattle were commonly used for

human consumption.[611] The fondness of Vedic Indians for meat is quite obvious from the passage which says that among all eatables "flesh or meat is the best kind of food."[612]

Inspite of this non-vegetarian love for meat-eating we find tender feelings for the cow-growing. Probably becoming aware of the usefulness of the cow the Aryans laid down,

> The Mother of the Rudras, Daughter of the Vasus, Centre of Nectar, Sister of the Adityas, to folk who understand. I will proclaim it—injure not Aditi the cow the sinless.[613]

The *Atharvaveda* counts the eating of cow's flesh as a sin against one's forefathers[614] and prohibits the relishing of beef.

Meat formed an important part of the diet even during the Sūtra period. Usually wild animals, cattle, fish and birds were consumed. The method of preparation included roasting on spits and cooking in utensils[615] as in modern times. In continuation of earlier traditions meat was indispensable during certain occasions, e.g., Madhuparka[616] and Śrāddha[617] feasts and Aṣṭakas.[618] *Madhuparka* was usually offered in honour of such guests as an officiating priest Ṛtvik, a Snātaka, the king, a teacher, a friend, a maternal uncle, a paternal uncle and father-in-law. Another name for this kind of reception is *argha* or *arghya*.[619] The *madhuparka* usually consisted of honey curds and ghee but other varieties are also mentioned in the Sūtras.[620] In this ceremony a cow was announced to the guest. If the guest wished to consume it he recited the formula "Destroyed is my sin; my sin is destroyed *Oṁ,* do it." However, if he chose to let her free he announced: "The mother of the Rudras, the daughter of the Vasus, the sister of the Ādityas, the navel of immortality, to the people who understand me, I say, 'Do not kill the guiltless cow who is Aditi.' 'Let her drink water, let her eat grass.' '*Oṁ*! let her go'."[621]

In the latter case the meal for the guest was prepared with some other kind of meat. As such a reception could not be performed without meat.[622] This highlights the importance of meat on special occasions.

Śrāddhas were performed for the departed soul and were considered conducive to the happiness of both the departed soul and the bereaved family. The meat of a rhinoceros was particularly recommended at this feast.[623] The *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra* states that

> on the eleventh day after the death the relatives of the dead should feed an odd number of Brahmins with a meal at which meat is served; it adds that a cow is also immolated by some in honour of the dead.[624]

In fact an amazing practice is revealed when it is stated that if an ascetic, who had been invited to a Śrāddha feast or a feast relating to gods, refused to partake meat it was ensured that he had to rot in hell for as many years as there were hairs on the body of the sacrificed animal![625]

The Aṣṭaka was probably related to the new year festivities.[626] In the Sūtras it is stated, "The Aṣṭaka festival is sacred to night. It procures prosperity. It is sacred to Agni, or to the Pitṛs, or to Prajāpati, or to the seasons, or to the Viśvadevas," thus the deity to whom the *aṣṭaka* was dedicated is differently interpreted by different authorities.[627] In the observance of this too the sacrifice of a cow is mentioned.[628] Options of various types are also mentioned:

> If he cannot get a cow, he should procure a ram or a he-goat for this purpose or he may perform it with such meat of wild creatures as is available. He may offer the meat of any of the following creatures mixed with sesame seeds and honey: a rhinoceros, a deer, a buffalo, a ram, a boar, a spotted antelope (Priṣata), a hare, a red deer, a Sāraṅga (probably a kind of spotted antelope), a partridge, a pigeon, a heathcock, Kapiñjala, and Vardhranāsa (a kind of crane) or he may offer fish, or milk rice, or boiled rice and soup. . . .[629]

This gives us an idea of the prevalence of the custom of "non-vegetarianism" and the fondness for and little compunction about eating meat.

The epics also provide us with instances which substantiate the above concept. The heroes are portrayed as habitual meat-eaters. When Yudhiṣṭhira fed thousands of guests, he provided them with milk and rice, ghee (clarified butter) and fruits as also with the meat of boar and the deer. Various preparations of meat were served along with those of milk and grain.[630] When Kīcaka ordered a sumptuous meal he had various kinds of excellent meat.[631] In the hunting season when the prnices hunt deer they were obviously meant for consumption.[632] The animals offered at sacrifices were also eaten because we have mention of the them being cooked according to the due rites.[633] On the occasions of the festivities of Abhimanyu's marriage many deer and other animals were slain.[634] Similar festivities on other occasions also may have been accompanied by slaughter of animals.

The story of the fowler[635] who justifies his trade by declaring that animal food is prescribed in the Śruti or sacred literature is very enlightening. It is enquired what sin can there be in slaying animals when every day every minute we are trampling on innumerable organisms in trees and fruits,

water, etc. in ignorance? Thus we see that in the past people indulged in animal slaughter and enjoyed the delicacies prepared from meat.

There were certain kinds of food that were banned to everyone.[636] "He shall not eat that food in which there is a hair, or any other unclean substance. Nor must that food be eaten which has been touched with an unclean substance, nor that in which an insect living on impure substances is found, nor that in which excrements or limbs of a mouse are found, nor that which has been touched by foot; nor that what has been touched by a dog or an Apapatra. . . . He shall not eat food which has been bought or obtained ready prepared in the market. Nor shall he eat flavoured food bought in the market excepting raw meat, honey and salt. Oil and clarified butter bought in the market he may use, after having sprinkeld them with water. Prepard food which has stood for a night must neither be eaten nor drunk, nor should prepared food that has turned sour. All intoxicating drinks are forbidden. . . . Likewise the milk of cows during the first ten days after their giving birth to young ones. Likewise food mixed with herbs which serve for preparing intoxicating liquor. Likewise garlic, onions and leeks. Mushrooms ought not to be eaten, that has been declared in a Brāhmaṇa, nor the meat of one hoofed animals, of camels, of the *gayal*, of the village pigs, of sarabhas and of cattle. But the meat of milch cows and oxen may be eaten."

The Vājasaneyaka declares, "bull's flesh is fit for offerings." "Among birds that scratch with their feet for food, the tame cock must not be eaten, among birds that feed thrusting forward their beaks, and carnivorous birds are forbidden. Five toed animals ought not to be eaten with the exception of the iguana, the tortoise, the boar called Svavit, the porcupine, the rhinoceros, and the hare. Among fishes, the *ceta* ought not to be eaten, nor the snake-headed fish, nor the alligator, nor those which live on flesh only, nor those which are mis-shaped like mermen."[637] Among the acts which make men impure, *aśucikara* is:

> Eating the flesh of forbidden creatures as of a dog, a man, village cocks and pigs (may be because of their filthy feeding habits) and carnivorous animals . . . some declare that certain acts also cause a man to lose his caste.[638]
>
> After having eaten forbidden food, he must fast until his entrails are empty. That is generally attained after seven days. Or he may during winter bathe in cold water both morning and evening. Or he may perform a *kṛcchra* penance, which lasts twelve days.[639]
>
> In case one has eaten any kind of forbidden food or that given by a person whose food must not be eaten, the means of removing the guilt is to sprinkle water while one recites the *taratsamandiṛkas*.[640]

We do not find in the Sūtras any mention of expiatory ceremonies to avert the evil effects of a flaw in decapitation.

But slowly the concept of vegetarianism was growing. Various explanations[641] have been offered for this.

An age deeply influenced by the tenet of *ahiṁsā* (kindness to all) of Buddhism and Jainism, naturally rejected killing of animals. In fact a passage in the epic is very interesting. Here not only is there condemnation of those who slay animals for food, but of those too who make the oxen bear huge loads or torture them in other ways. Even agriculture was declared sinful as the ploughshare wounds many creatures living in the earth, while the bullocks are tortured through being yoked in the plough. It was similarly sinful to trade in animals living or dead, or even to offer them for sacrifice. The proper objects that should be offered are herbs, fruits and roots or libations of butter milk and curd with probably a ball of rice.[642]

The Indian climate is most conducive to the growth of grains, fruits and vegetables. Therefore there was an abundance of these food articles. Besides being a tropical country it is not so cold as to necessitate the intake of meat.

With the establishment of the *āśrama* theory a person spent nearly twelve to forty-eight years as a *brahmacarya* during which he had to abstain from consuming meat, liquor, etc. Thus a person who did not develop a taste for non-vegetarian food could not obviously begin eating it suddenly.

The spread of concepts like the transmigration of the soul, or the famous *karma* theory according to which a soul does not achieve *mokṣa* or release from the cycle of birth until there is an end to all the wrong deeds, further aided vegetarianism. Slaughtering of animals was indeed sinful because one was taking life, therefore people began to abstain from such food. With the realisation of the usefulness of the cow and bulls for its use in agriculture, as a source of vital food like milk and milk products, and when dead as a source of leather, all added to the value of the cow and the bull. Cattle came to be used as a medium of exchange. The fine for killing a cow was a hundred cows and bulls and a vow of continence for three years.[643] However the sin of killing a cow is recorded as a minor sin or an *upapātaka*.[644]

As time elapsed and the Brāhmaṇical religion with its array of sacrifices began to have a stronghold cows came to be regarded as the source of essentials required in sacrfice. The cow was considered the repository of sacrificial oblation while the Brāhmaṇa was thought to be the repository

of the *mantras* of sacrifice. The two were bracketted together in later days as regards their sacredness and inviolability.

Thus in the growth of vegetarianism the injunctious were mainly against cow-slaughter not so much the other animals. Thus even today the cow and bull are held sacred by the Hindu Indians while other animals are consumed without much compunction.

Megasthenes[645] writes that Indians lead a very simple life. Their beverage is a liquor prepared from rice instead of barley and their food is principally a rice pottage (curry and rice). He further gives us a vivid description of the way the Indians ate: a table is placed before each person, this being like a tripod. There is placed upon it a golden bowl, into which they first put rice boiled as one would boil barley and then they add many delicacies prepared according to Indian recipes.

The most usual and common drink was milk and various other drinks made from milk—buttermilk, *takra* mixed with water, *mantha* or the combination of milk and parched barley meal *saktu*. Besides these curd water, or melted butter seem to have been, consumed. From the Sūtras[646] we gather the names of some other drinks that seem to have been known to the people of that age. It is stated that if the sacrificer cannot afford to give away cows as sacrificial fees he should give a drink of *mantha* or a mess of rice to Brāhmaṇas. Very interestingly it is stated different *manthas* for different castes are also prescribed. The Ajyamantha or *mantha* prepared in melted butter is prescribed for a Brāhmaṇa, Payomantha or *mantha* prepared in milk for a Rājanya, Dadhimantha or as the name suggests *mantha* prepared in curds for a Vaiśya and Udamantha or that which is prepared in water for a Śūdra.[647]

Soma was a hieratic drink and most scholars feel that it was not an intoxicant. The later texts mention many sacrifices connected with drinking *soma*.

Since *soma* was a very rare creeper certain substitutes like *pulika* plants, *arjuanas* with white flower, or *kuśa* grass may be pressed.[648] *Adara* and *phalguna* plants with white tufts are also mentioned as substitutes.[649] In dire necessity rice and barley plants may be pressed.[650] *Soma* is always eulogised in comparison to *surā* especially in the earlier texts. In the Brāhmaṇa text it is clearly stated, "*Soma* is truth prosperity and light, *surā* is untruth, misery or vice and darkness."[651]

The Dharmasūtras also condemn and prohibit *surā* drinking.[652] *Surā* was a spirituous liquor and was usually made from *oṣadhi* herbs or

medicinal herbs that wither away after producing fruits—and water mixed together.[653] Sometimes it was also prepared from fermented rice.[654]

Another kind or liquor was Parisrut.[655] This was also prepared by fermenting grains or herbs but in this full fementation was not allowed. Another beverage called Masara is mentioned in the Śrautasūtras.[656] This was probably used in the preparation of Surā. One of the Gṛhyasūtras[657] mentions three kinds of liquor, namely Madhu, Maireya, and Surā.

Intoxicating liquors for drinking distilled from sugar or from the blossoms of the *madhuka*, or from flour—these three kinds of spirituous liquor have to be discerned; as one, so are all, none of them must be tasted by the twice-born. Again, distilled from the blossoms of the *madhuka* tree, from molasses, from the fruits of the *tarika* tree, of the jujube tree, of the date tree, of the bread fruit tree, winegrapes from *madhuka* blossoms, *Maireya* and the sap of the coconut tree; these ten intoxicating drinks are unclean for a Brāhmaṇa but a Kṣatriya and Vaiśya commit no wrong in touching them."[658]

The prohibitions against liquor affected the Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas negligibly, because they were allowed various kinds of drinks. The *Rāmayaṇa* describes sage Bharadvāja offering wine to Bharata and his soldiers. We find Rāma "embracing Sītā, with both hands made her drink pure *maireya* wine, even as Indra makes Śacī drink nectar." The well-known personalities of *Mahābhārata*—Kṛṣṇa, Baladeva and Arjuna indulge in drinking in the company of their wives, sisters and daughters. Queens like Sudeṣṇā quench their thirst with wine.[659] Kauṭilya devotes a section in his *Arthaśāstra* giving regulations regarding the manufacture and sale of various kinds of liquor, thus showing the prevalence of this custom. The source vividly describes, "Aryans lying down in intoxication along with their beautiful mistresses in wine shops."[660]

Thus we find that the Kṣatriyas, in fact all the other castes as well led a life free from anethemas about food and drink. The profile of the Kṣatriyas is of one leading an unrestrained, fun-loving riotous life enjoying good food and good wine.

Costume and Jewellery

"Garment is man's outward appearance whence people on seeing a well clad man, asks, who can this be? "for he is perfect in his outward appearance." This is a statement recorded in as old a text as the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. Even today in spite of a gap of thousands of years this outlook

has changed but little.[661] Natural calamities like heat, cold and rain forced the most intelligent creature on earth to seek some kind of protection against these hazards. An interesting anecdote is recorded in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*: in the early Vedic age the Aryans wore cow's leather. Taking into consideration the utility of the cows, the gods took back cow's leather from man's body and returned it to the cows. However a man not wearing leather was perpetually wounded, so god created clothes and men got back lost covering.[662]

The costumes and materials in the Vedic period are known by casual references thus it is difficult to construct the history of Indian costumes with great accuracy. Garments made of wool, cotton and silk were known to the people of the Vedic period. However Moti Chandra differs here and states cotton was not known to the Vedic Indians. According to him, the earliest reference of cotton is found in the *Āpastamba Śrauta-sūtra*.[663] However, other scholars, like Jogirāj Basu feel that the term *sūtra* refers to cotton while *ūrṇa* to (wool) made from sheep's hair.[664] Wool was an important material for manufacturing cloth. Fine wool was obtained from the ewes of Gandhāra and the regions through which Indus and Paruśni (Ravi) flowed. Wool from these areas were probably used for manufacturing blankets (*kambala*), *dhussa* (*dursa*), and perhaps *panval*.[665]

That people were fond of dressing can be understood from the word *suvāsa* or well clad. The most usual word for clothing was *vasas* though *vasana* and *vastra* also express the same idea. The terms *suvāsa* (well clad) and *suvasa* (good garment) occur quite frequently in Brāhmaṇa literature. The clothes were also well-fitting or *surabhi*.

Warp or loom, woof or *otu, tantu* or yarn, the different aspects of weaving can be traced in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.[666] Womenfolk were usually engaged in this profession. Sewing and kntitting were the other, womanly prerogatives: "It is the duty of women to knit, sew or stitch."[667]

The general dress consisted of three parts—the main portion closely fitting the body was called the *vasa* over this was worn the *adhi-vasa* or *upavasana* generally consisting of a wrapper or sometimes served as a jacket, bodice or cloak like *pratidhi, drapi* or *atka*. *Pesas* probably the forerunner of modern *peshwaz* was worn by dancing girls.[668] An undergarment called *nivi* or loin cloth sometimes having long and unwoven fringe,[669] was also used.

The Vedic Aryans appear to have been fond of embroidery. When a cloth was woven it was embroidered (at the bottom) before the actual texture

was woven then it was embroidered in the middle and again the other border was embroidered.[670]

White cloth was preferred while some women used dyed cloth; the *vratyas* had preference for dark blue cloth.[671]

During a sacrifice special garments had to be worn like skirts made of *kuśa* grass. The "sacrificial garments" also consisted of an undergarment made of silk called *tarpya* and the main garment made of pure wool and an outer garment like *adhivasa* and a headdress or turban *uṣṇīṣa*.[672] There is controversy among scholars whether *tarpya* means silk or some other textile. The importance of the headdress can be seen from the fact that the king had to wear his turban during the coronation ceremony. Probably the queens also wore them because we have reference of Indra's queen Indrāṇī's most colourful and embroidered head band.[673]

The skins of animals were worn by the gods and munis, *vratyas* and aboriginal tribes. Goat and antelope skins were preferred.

Ascetics on the other hand came to be identified by their dress which consisted of the skin of the black antelope. The Kṛṣṇajina Brahmacārins, sages and mendicants, because of their peculiar dress came to be called the Ajina.[674]

Kṣauma, most probably linen, *barasī* or cloth manufactured from the bark of *baras* tree and *tarpya* were also known.[675]

In describing the armours of that age there is mention of gold[676] and silver[677] armours along with iron.[678] One certainly wonders how far gold and silver were practical materials for such use. They were probably used more as decorative pieces than probably actual warfare. Miscellaneous items like arm-chair with head cushion *asandi sopavarhaṇa*,[679] cushions for seats fashioned with gold and silver threads called *Hiraṇyakaśipu* and *Hiraṇakurca* (may be like the modern *kurcī*) are accounted for.[680] We hear of mats made of twigs of the *plakṣa* tree and use of bed covers of *astaraṇas*[681] as well.

Shoes are not mentioned in the early Vedic literature only stray references to foot fasteners and footguards used in battlefields are found in the *Ṛgveda*. The *upanaḥ* or shoes are first mentiond in the *Yajurveda* and were worn at the ritual.[682] During the Rājasūya *yajña* the king probably wore slippers made from boar skin.[683] Antelope skin also may have been used.

Thus we find that even in the Vedic age people were aware of various kinds of textiles and encouraged the growth of fine arts like embroidery

and stitching. Obviously this kind of tradition must have left a rich legacy for the generations to follow.

Carrying on the tradition of the earlier period Indians of the Sūtra period wore many kinds of clothes made from cotton, wool, flax, hemp, animal skin, silk, *kuśa* grass and bark. As in modern India, then also cotton, linen and woollen clothes were most commonly used. As in the earlier period garments made of *kuśa* grass were reserved for sacrificial purposes. Among the other varieties of textiles linen or *kṣaume* came to be regarded as the most suited for religious occasions.[684] It is however stated that though linen clothes had to be worn at the Agnyadhana, concessions could be made for wearing cotton and woollen clothes if linen was not available.[685] In the *Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra*[686] we find mention of silken garments also called *kauśeya*. During this period also we find mention of the controversial *tarpya* garments. The *Baudhāyana Śrautasūtra*[687] offers the explanation that *tarpya* is either a cloth saturated with *ajya* or one made of the material derived from *tṛpa* trees. In the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* we find *tarpya* and bark garments mentioned together. This naturally leads to the theory that *tarpya* represents garments made from the bark of *tṛpa* trees.

However the *Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra* offers a completely novel concept of threefold origin. According to it, it is a linen garment, or one-thrice saturated with ghee or a *tripaṇa* which, according to commentators suggests cloth made of such yarn as was thrice soaked in water before weaving. Eggeling and some other scholars suggest that *tarpya* probably was a silken undergarment.[688]

From the description given in the Sūtra literature about the uniform of the *brahmacārins* we can gather much information about the clothing materials used in that era.

The uniform of the student generally cansisted of an animal skin Ajina a piece of cloth (*vasas*), a girdle *(mekhala)*, and a staff (*daṇḍa*). Clothes of hemp, flax, wool, cotton and animal skin for the *brahmacārins* of different castes is laid down.

The skin of a black antelope (*aineyajina*), the skin of a spotted deer (*rauravajina*) and the skin of a goat or a cow should be used by a Brāhmaṇa,a Kṣatriya and a Vaiśya respectively as the upper garment.[689] Another Sūtra prescribes the skin of black antelope (*ena*) for a Brāhmaṇa, that of a tiger for Kṣatriya, and that of a spotted deer (*ruru*) for a Vaiśya.[690] It is also stated that if the prescribed skins are not available the skin of a cow may be used by students of all castes.[691] The *Mānava Gṛhyasūtra*[692] states that the skin

of a black antelope may be used by all in the absence of any other alternative.

There were similar guidelines about the *vasas*, the piece of cloth used by the students. It was laid down that garments of hemp or *sana* should be used by a Brāhmaṇa,[694] linen or *kṣuma* by a Kṣatriya and wool for the Vaiśyas.[693] A little variation regarding this presentation is found in the *Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra*. Here a Brāhmaṇa is allowed the use of linen or hempen clothes, a Kṣatriya cotton clothes and a Vaiśya woollen clothes.

The *mekhata* fibresranges from *muñja* grass, *jāya* (bow-string), woollen *tambala* (probably *sana*), *tamala, mūrva* grass, *kuśa, asmantaka balbaja,* etc.[695]

The dress of the people usually consisted of two main garments, an upper garment or *uttarīya* and an undergarment of *antariya* or *antarvāsas*.[696] The Gṛhyasūtras mention a turban *uṣṇīṣa* for a Snātaka whereas the Śrautasūtras prescribe one for a king at the Rājasūya.[697] The king was enjoined upon to wear a white turban at the Rājasūya.[698] We have seen earlier that wearing of *uṣṇīṣa* was alluded to but the Sūtras do not support it. Instead they mention *kumba-kurīra* as connected with the headdress of women. It is mentioned that at the time of the Rājasūya goldsmiths were asked to make as many *kumba-kurīras* as there were queens in the royal harem.[699] We infer that the *kumba-kurīra* was closely associated with the headdress of women, from the rule that the sacrificer's wife was to put on a *kumba-kurīra* at the time when the sacrificer wore a turban.[700] Some Sūtrakāras describe the *kumba-kurīra* as a hair net.[701] Kātyāyana[702] mentions the *jāl* or net in a similar context. The same text prescribes a *chandataka* made of grass perhaps an undergarment like a loin cloth for the wife of the sacrificer at the Vājapeya.[703] The king's dress during the Rājasūya provides enlightening information about the type of garments probably worn by the nobles and aristocrats. The king at the Rājasūya first wears *tarpya* (here the meaning of *tarpya* as a silken undergarment seems valid) secondly a garment called *pāṇḍva* then *adhivāsa*, probably a garment like a mantle worn on certain sacrifical occasions, and finally the *uṣṇīṣa*.[704] The *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* mentions an upper garment called *pravaraṇa* which again probably resembled the scarf.[705]

The mention of various types of needles and sewing in the Śrautasūtras affirm the existence of sewn garments. There is mention of a *tarpya* garment embroidered with figures of sacrificial implements, pointing to the existence, like in the earlier period, of embroidered garments.[706] Since weaving was popular in the earlier period it may be presumed that the

practice continued even during the Sūtra period. The beautiful verse that a bride while wearing the upper garment recited points to the existence of weaving and that it was considered almost sacred:

> The goddesses, who spun and wove, who stretched the warp, and who crosses the woof, may clothe you for old age. Blessed with long life you put on this garment.[707]

Besides clothes there is mention of blankets made of wool. These blankets or *kambala* were prescribed for the *brahmacārin* or students of all castes.[708]

Blankets were also made from the hair of the mountain goat. These were known a *kutapas*.[709] In connection with the Aśvamedha there is mention of *śyāmula* which has been interpreted as woollen shirt or woollen garment.[710] Another similar word *samula* has caused controversy among scholars.[711] According to some it represents a woollen shirt.[712] Whereas others suggest that it signifies a blanket made from such material as contains the mixture of *samulaka*.[713]

Coloured or dyed clothes were also in fashion during this age. We get reference to this in the description of the uniform of the students: Brāhmaṇa should wear reddish yellow *kaṣaya*, Kṣatriyas were entitled to *mañjiṣṭha* (dyed with madder), the Vaiśyas wore yellow or *haridra* coloured clothes.[714] A student who observed the Mahānamnī *vrata* were supposed to wear black coloured clothes.[715] A Snātaka was forbidden to wear dyed garments.[716] Priests engaged in the performance of rites wore red garments.[717]

Similar textiles are again mentioned in the Jātakas. Cotton, silk, linen and *kotumbara* were the commonly used fabrics for clothes. The Mahājanaka Jātaka[718] mentions the use of cotton. There are vivid descriptions of cotton-fields (*kappasakhetta*) in the neighbourhood of Benares.[719] Women were usally employed to look after the proper upkeep of such fields and were designated as *kāppāsararakkhikā* or keeper of the cotton-fields.[720] In a story we find that women spun (*kantitva*) fine thread (*sukhuma suttani*) and made a ball (*gulam*) of it.[721] Technical terms connected with spinning and carding, e.g., bow for carding cotton, *kappasapothana dhanukam*[722] appear in the Jātakas. The Jātakas also contain references to organisation of craftsmen into guilds. Among the guilds we find the guild of weavers or embroiderers (*peśakarasippa*). All this goes a long way in proving that the weaving industry was a flourishing industry in that era.

The artisans of the cloth industry were embroiders (*peśakarasippa*) weavers, *tantuvaya* tailors, *tunnāga* and silk weaver or *pattagara*.[723]

However, it is interesting to note that the Brāhmaṇa archer calls the work of a weaver (*tantuvaya*) a miserable low work[724] (*tamaka kamma*). In the *Suttavibhaṅga,*[725] the potter, the weaver, the cobbler and the barber are mentioned as below. In the time of Buddha the cotton of Benares acquired countrywide fame. Buddhist literature is replete with references to the cloth of Kāśī, the *Kāśī-kuttama*.[726] The *Majjhimanikāya*[727] praises the fineness of the structure of Benares cloth. Both the obverse and reverse of the Benares cotton was soft and smooth. The fine quality of the cloth was attributed to the cleverness of the women weavers and the good quality soft water used for bleaching.

How famous Kāśī cotton was during the Buddhist period can be judged from the fact that it is identified with the term *vilita kappasa* (the calendered cloth: modern Hindi, *kundī kiyā huā,* which was used to cover the mortal remains of the world ruler.[728] The *Kāśī-kavattha* was so fine that it did not absorb oil.[729]

Silk was also produced in Benares and possibly Bihar. Silk must have been quite widely used because even the Buddha permitted the use of *kauśeya pravara*[730] or silken chadar to the Bhikkhus. Linen or *śauma* was another textile commonly ordained as the cloth for making *cīvara* of the Bhikkhus.[731] The same text further mentions linen being combined with wool to produce blankets.[732] Five hundred such blankets were presented by the king of Kāśī to Jīvaka Kumārabhṛtya who in turn gave it to Buddha.[733]

Koṭumbara is a cloth of doubtful identity. It could be the name applied to woollen or bark or cotton stuff manufactured in the country of Auḍumbaras.[734]

We get references that wool was used as basic material for the manufacture of various types of cloth which were usually designated by the word *kambala*.[735] The Śivi country was famous for the shawls manufactured there. The *siveyyaka dussa* (*dussa* meaning chadar) is praised in the *Mahāvagga*.[736] In the Śivi Jātaka we find the king of Kosala presented one *dasabala,* a piece of cloth which cost one thousand pieces of money.[737] The Jātakas also praise the famous Paṇḍukambala of Gandhāra.[738]

Vāhitika was another variety of cloth manufactured from wool.[739] This kind of mateial was sent by Ajātaśatru to Prasenajit who offered it to Ānanda,a favourite disciple of Buddha.[740] In the *Mahāvagga* we find that

the Bhikkhus were forbidden from using *namtaka*, i.e., felt, and *kojava* or fluffy blanket as they were luxurious woollen products.[741]

Clothes were also made from *sana* (hemp), *bhaṅgaika* (made of hemp) *phelaka chira, kuśachira*, *valkala* (bark) made of straw, *hiraṇya* cloth and skin cloth.[742]

Skin (*ajina*) is mentioned in the Jātakas.[743] The skins of such animals as lions, tigers, leopard, cow and deer were used both for clothing and bedsheets.[744] It is interesting to note that the skins of different animals found preference in different parts of India. In the Madhyadeśa (i.e., mainly U.P. and Bihar) skins of the eragu, moragu and cats or *majjaru* were prevalent. In the Dakṣiṇāpatha ram, goat and deer skins served as coverlets.[745] Certain concessions were made even in the case of Bhikkhus who were not allowed any clothing or bedding of skin. All the fabrics and textiles discussed above, were allowed to the laymen, Dyed cloths were in fashion among laymen. The usual colours were indigo, yellow, crimson, magenta, black and turmeric or *haldī*. Fashionable clothes with cut borders, long borders, embroidered borders, in the shape of the serpents' hood were popular among the common folk.[746]

The dress of the laymen consisted of three pieces—*antarvasaka* or loin cloth, *uttarasaṅga* or mantle for covering the upper part of the body and *uṣṇīṣa* or the turban.[747] It has been suggested in more simple terms: the male householder wore a dhoti, a *dupaṭṭā* (scarf) and a turban.[748]

Tunics, Kañcuka were also worn by men and women.[749] This tunic may have been like the modern day *kurtā* or jacket or a coat hanging down as low as the hip or lower down to the legs.

This female householder wore the *kañcuka* and a sari or *sattasataka*.[750]

The Jātakas provide information about the attractive ways of wearing the loin cloth: the *hastiśauṇḍaka* or the "elephant trunk" model in which the pleated end was made to fall down in the same way as the pleated end of the saris of the women of the Cola country. The *matsyavālaka* style meant the long and short borders were pleated in the shape of fish tail. In the *catuṣkarṇaka* style four ends of the garment were shown, this was probably possible either in the case of *uttarāsaṅga* or tunic cut at the sides. The *tālavṛntaka* style consisted of hanging the pleated end of the loin cloth to be shaped like a palmette. In the *śatavallika* style many pleats and creases were shown.[751] In wearing the cloth the end was tucked behind.

The *kamarband* or *kāyabandhana* (waistband) were named differently depending on the fashion in which it was worn.[752] Some of the styles were the *kalavuka* in which the *kamarbands* were made of many strings plaited together; the *deḍḍubhaka* was literally shaped like a "water serpent's hood." The knot tapered to one end. The *muraja* style meant shaped like a "tom tom."[753] The *maddavina* meant a girdle with ornaments hanging from it.[754]

The women of this age were fond of looking attractive by wearing the *kamarband* and *paṭaka* in various fashionable styles. *Paṭakas* were usually arranged in very artistic ways. The *Cullavagga*[755] gives us a list of materials from which *paṭakas* were made. They were the *viliva* or made from woven bamboo fibres, leather or *carmapaṭṭa, dussapṭṭa* or woollen cloth, *dussaveni* or plaited woollen cloth, *dussavatti* or fringed cloth, *colaveni* or interwined strips of cola cloth, *colavatti* or fringes imported from Cola country, *suttavatthi* or plaited strips of cotton cloth and twisted yarn.

Now a look at the dress of the Bhikkhus will show the austere nature of their existence. The Buddha forbade the use of *kuśa* grass cloth, or *kuśacīra*, bark or *balaka,* wood or *phalaka,* human hair or *keśakambala* or *bal-kambala*, the feathers of an owl, strips of deer skin and cloth made from the fibrous stalks of the mandara.

The Bikkhus and Bhikkuṇīs were to abstain from the use of any dyed or fshionable garments, e.g., tucking the loin cloth at the back was forbidden to the Bhikkus and the Bhikkhuṇīs could tie only one round of the *kamarband* round their waist; wearing *paṭakas* in artistic ways were absolutely forbidden.[756]

The dress of the Bhikkhus and Bhikkhuṇīs were the same except that the Bhikkhuṇīs were allowed the use of the *kañcuka* or bodice.[757] Three pieces of garments dyed yellow were allowed: *saṁghāti* of double waist cloth, *antarvāsaka* or upper garment, *uttarāsaṅga* or mantle.[758] They were also allowed a sheet for sitting called *pṛtyastaraṇa*, a *kaṇḍuka praticchādana* four span long and two span broad, a *kopina* when suffering from itches.

Varṣikasātika or a spare loin cloth was allowed in the rainy weather. The Bhikkhus were allowed the use of *āyoga paṭṭa* (a piece of cloth passed round both legs and tied at the back). They were allowed the use of the loom *tantaka* with shuttles, *vemaka* strings, *vatta* tickets, *salākā*.[759]

The waistbands were usually ordinary or intricately woven.[760]

They were allowed to show the edges and borders of *kamarbands*, use clasps and buttons. However the clasps and buttons and fasteners had to be

made of bone, conch-shell and yarn. Gold and silver were strictly forbidden from use.[761]

The Jaina monks were allowed to wear three garments, also two dhotis of linen and a woollen chadar.[762] Śīlāṅka in his commentary states that in winter the Jaina monks could use two loin cloths each measuring one and a quarter yard both in length and breadth as well as a woollen garment. On the passing of the winter season they could wear linen dhotis.

Besides a description of the costume of that age our sources provide us with information about other household articles. We hear of Citaka a carpet made with cloth pieces of many colours to cover the bedding. Palikā probaly refers to a white woollen carpet. Patalikā was a carpet with densely embroidered flowers. Tūtika quilt stuffed with cotton. Vikatika was a cover embroidered with figures of lions, tigers, etc. Uddalomi was a carpet with hair on both sides. Halthatthara and Assalthara were pieces of cloth which were spread on an elephant or a horse or a chariot.[763]

The *Mahāvagga*[764] gives us details about the shoes that were in fashion. The shoes that covered the ankles or *puṭabaddha*, full boots or *paḍiguṇṭhima*, shoes padded with cotton wool or the *tūlapuṇṇika* shoes shaped like the wings of a partridge or *tittirapattika*, shoes decorated with the horns of ram and goat, shoes with curved points like a scorpion's sting or Vṛścikālika shoes decorated with peacock feathers or Morapiñcha-parisibbita shoes were also made from skins of lions, tigers, deer, leopards, cats, squirrels, and owls.[765]

Wooden sandals or *pāduka* and sandals made from palm leave straws, a kind of reed *mūñja hintal* wood, *kamala* or lotus, *balabaja* grass and wool were used by the lay people.[766] The rich wore sandals decorated or made from gold, silver, jewels, bryl, crystal, bronze, glass, cat's-eye, *vaidūrya*, quartz, *sphaṭika,* tin, and copprer.[767]

With the coming of the Mauryas we are better placed in studying the history of Indian costume. Besides the literature of the period we get abundant evidence in sculptures and bas-reliefs to help us to reconstruct the history more authentically. During this period, we get important information from secular literature like Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* and the *Indika* of Megasthenes and we are also helped in our study by gathering information from certain portion of the Sabhāparva of the *Mahābhārata* which seems to have been composed in the second century BC.

In the *Arthaśāstra* we find that different clothes were used during different seasons.[768] An entire chapter in this book is devoted to the duties

of the superintendent of weaving. Threads (*sūtra*), coats (*varma*), cloths (*vastra*), and ropes (*rajju*), were the main manufactures of the weaving department. We get information about the textiles used in that age from the materials used in spinning. They were *ūrṇa* (wool), *balka* (fibres), *karpāsa* (cotton), *tūla, śaṇa* (hemp), and *kṣauma* (flax).[769] Just as in the Vedic age in the *Arthaśāstra* also we find that only women were employed for spinning and their wages depended upon the fineness of the yarn they spun.[770] Special tokens beside their wages, like scents, garlands and other gifts were given to encourage the weavers who were engaged in the manufacture of linen (*kṣauma*), *dukula* cloth from the fibres of the *dukula* plant, silk (*kṛmitana*; Hindi, *katan*) used for the finest quality of white silk yarn, woollen stuff (*rāṅkava*) and cotton cloth. Bedsheets (*vastrastaraṇa*) and curtains (*prāvaraṇa*) were also manufactured in this department.[771]

Cotton seems to have been in great demand during this age. The Greeks, being unaware of the source of cotton, called it wool growing on trees.[772]

The Sabhāparva[773] refers to the places from which different varieties of textile, leather and fur were imported into India. We hear of clothes made from sheep's wool and embroidered with the golden hair of fox,[774] woollen sheets and leather,[775] costly shawls,[776] and skin of the Kaduli deer[777] were imported from Kamboja country. It is stated that the Kambojas, the people of Badakhshān and Pāmir presented Yudhiṣṭhira during the Rājasūya *yajña* with woollen cloth *(auṛṇa*), embroidered with gold (*jātarūpapariṣkṛtān*) which must have been probably an embroidered shawl and the skins of the animals that live in holes (*baitan*) and wild cats (*vārṣadaṁśān*) which were furs probably of the animals of the Martin and Weasel families.

Blankets and skins of goat and sheep were imported from the Pari Sindhu region.[778] The Abhīras brought woollen cloth of various designs namely *kāmbatan*, *vividhan*[779] which were not made from cotton, *vastram akārpāsam* but created from the soft wool of the sheep (*āvikam*) and shaggy goat (*ajinam*). Shawls manufactured from the wool and the hair of deer (*rāṇkavaḥ*)[780] were of good colour and dimensions and were made in Céna and Vāhlīka. Sheep's wool, very fine wol called *paśama*, silk (*kītaja*) and clothes made of *paṭṭa* were also imported from Vāhlīka (Bālhīka) and Cīna (China).

The social life of the Indians as depicted by the Greek writers shows progress in every sphere. The dress of the Indians as mentioned by

Herodotus consisted of a garment made of rushes. According to him the weed was cut, beaten and plaited like a mat and was worn.[781] Nearchus's description of the dress appears to be what was more in vogue age.[782] According to him, they (the Indians) wore a tunic which went down to the knee, a piece of cloth round their shoulders and a turban. The dress was made of finished cotton. Megasthenes contrasts the general simplicity of Indians in other matters with their love for finery and ornament in dress. According to him, their robes are worked in gold and ornamented with precious stones and they were also flowered garments made of the finest muslin. They carried sun shades with them for they had a high regard for beauty and availed themselves of every device to improve their appearances.[783]

The costume as described by the historians is corroborated by the archaeological discoveries, e.g., the finding of detached *yakṣa* statues from Parkham and Baroda in the Mathura Museum, the *yakṣa* figures and a statue of a *yakṣiṇī* from Besnagar now in the Indian Museum, and the image of a *yakṣiṇī* from Didarganj now in the museum, which have been ascribed to the Mauryan period. Of course there is controversy about their dates among scholars.

The Parkham *yakṣa* wears a loin cloth with an elaborate frill hanging in front held by the girdle which is also tied in a knot at the pelvis with two ends hanging down to the knees. A scarf is tied round the chest with a loop hanging on the protruding belly. The *yakṣa* figure from Baroda is also decorated with a similar scarf.[784]

The *yakṣa* figures which are assigned to the Maurya period portray similar type of clothing. The loin cloth was fastened round the waist by a waistband tied in a bow with a long loop and two tassled ends hanging down in front. The loin cloth at the back is very long, almost reaches the ground, and in front is raised a little to show the bare feet. A broad scarf crosses the left shoulder to the right hip, hanging down in a loop in front of the bracelet and in a long train behind.[785]

Surprisingly, the turban is absent from these sculptures. However, a stone head discovered at Sāranātha is seen with a pagri.[786]

We can form some idea about the costume of the womenfolk from the dress of the *yakṣiṇī*. The Dīdārganj *yakṣiṇī* wears a loin cloth reaching the ankles which is secured to the waist with a five stringed girdle. A *paṭaka* or *phāsuka* with one looped end tucked in the loin cloth and the other hanging between the feet can be seen clearly. A twisted scarf hangs from

the right shoulder. The Besnagar *yakṣiṇī* also is found wearing a similar kind of dress, the only difference being that instead of a long loin cloth here reaches a little below the knee. This is fastened by a five stringed girdle over which a waistband is loosely worn and tied in a bow-shaped knot with one loop hanging down. The *paṭaka* tucked in her loin cloth a little below the navel has pleated borders.

The bas-relief of Bharhut provide us with further details. The Bharhut sculptures show the same dress—a dhoti, a light scarf and a turban. The dhoti is wound round the waist, gathered in front, draped between the legs and tucked behind. The length ia usually upto the knee, the maximum being upto the midleg. Conspicuously the dhotis are absolutely plain without any decoration. A similar dress must have been prevalent during the era under study as well.

The waistband or *pheṭa* securing the dhoti is usually tied in a bow-shapped knot with a loop hanging on one side and the two free ends on the other. The *paṭaka* is the decorative piece of cloth hanging between the legs and attached to the *kamarband*. This is either an embroidered piece[787] of cloth or plain cloth[788] with long fringes on both sides. It is also made with loose strings with ornamental tassels on both ends[789] or simple cords and no tassels.[790]

The body is quite bare except for a light scarf worn in various styles: the most common is to cover both shoulders and pass both ends through the armpits and make them hang delicately.[790a] One end the hung down and the other thrown back, or both ends are thrown back, simply made to hang down the chest, sometimes passed round the body and the end thrown over the left shoulder, were the other styles.

The *uṣṇīṣa* or *vestani* were mainly of two kinds. In the lighter turban[790b] the hair was gathered in a top knot and the bands of the scarf crossed exactly above the forehead and covered the knot and was tied to the knot. The heavier turban covered the whole head.[790c]

About the tunic or coat there is not much information except that it is represented only twice Terracotta figurines show man wearing a sleeved coat which is open but provided with a loop and knot to fasten across the chest.[791] In the railings of stupa II, of Sāñcī a soldier is represented wearing such a tunic can be seen.

The females in Bharhut suclpture wear the sari or dhoti exactly like the men.[791a] This sari reached just below the knee and the outer edge is gathered together in a continuous succession of equal sized stiff folds. The

sari like the dhoti is fastened by a girdle and waistband tied exactly as the men tie. The waistband was at times embroidered.[792] The *paṭaka* was decorated with the common zig-zag pattern.[793] Elaborate *paṭakas* of strung beads were also worn.[794]

The upper part of the body was usually devoid of clothing. The heads were however, covered with fine, beautiful veils. The veil of Devatā Culakoka falls down the back but Yakṣiṇī Candā's is more elaborate. At places the women are seen with *dupaṭṭās*.[795] Though turbans usually adorned the heads of men, women also at times wore them.[796]

Ornaments made of gold, silver, brass and iron are mentioned. But certainly the nobles preferred gold and disliked ornaments of silver, brass and iron. In fact "gold became the symbol of noble rank."[797] "All the four wives: Mahiṣi, Vāvata, Parivṛkta, and Palagalī wore gold ornaments, gold neckbands and gold necklaces.[798] That the Vedic Aryans were aware of pearls and had even devoloped the skill of fashioning them into ornaments is certain from the mention of a necklace with a hundred and one pearls in it.[799] Among the metal, gold, silver, tin, lead as well as the two varieties of *ayas* usually regarded as copper and iron were known and developed.[800] About ornaments and adornments we find both men and women wearing ornaments mainly of gold but also of other metals. Specially during festive occasions it was considered auspicious to wear ornaments. While describing the Sīmantonnayana ceremony *Sāṅkhyāyana Gṛhyasūtra* says, "Let the sacrificer cause his wife to sing merrily wearing, if she likes many golden ornaments."[801] In the description of the forms of marriages we find mention that in the Brahmā form of marriage the father gives away in marriage his daughter adorned with ornaments.[802] In the *Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra* it is stated that the ornaments of the season should be worn at the beginning of each season[803] while describing the Pratyāvarohaṇa. These minor reference prove that ornaments were used for every occasion.

At the conclusion of studentship, a Snātaka usually wore earrings or *karṇa veṣṭaku,* jewels (*maṇis*) and other golden ornaments.[804] The Snātaka also wore a golden jewel round his neck and tied a pellet *maṇi* of *badara* wood to his left arm.[805] The Snātaka was also enjoined to wear round his neck a perforated pellet of sandalwood or of *badara* wood, overlaid with gold at its aperture.[806] During the royal Aśvamedha *yajña* we find mention of thousand golden jewels, a thousand silver jewels and a thousand pearls.[807] A sacrificer like a Snātaka wore earrings at certain Śrauta sacrifices.[808]

Necklaces especially made of gold were very popular among both men and women. These necklaces were known as *niṣka*.[809] There is reference to the gift of slave maidens who wore *niṣkas* round their necks.[810] That silver *niṣkas* were also worn can probably be understood from the reference that the *vrātya* who acts as *gṛhapati* (householder) at the Vrātyastoma rite should wear a silver *niṣka*.[811] The same source again refers to an ornament which was called *rukmā*. It was round in shape dotted with twenty-one studs, sewn in a strap of antelope skin, and strung on a hempen cord of three strands, was worn round the neck of the breast.[812] It was most probably a golden ornament.

Silver *rukmās* are also mentioned by *Āpastamba* and *Baudhayana* Śrautasūtras.[813] Kātyāyana lays down that a priest, the sacrificer and his wife should wear golden chains probably the *sraj* before the extraction of *soma* juice at the Vājapeya.[814] Snātakas are also mentioned wearing golden chains.[815] Thus we see that most of the jewellery or ornaments mentioned are either connected with some auspicious occasion like a sacrifice or the completion of the course of study or just simply during festivities. From these we have to infer the type of jewellery used in daily life.

Certain archaeological[816] remains show the type of jewellery used during the Buddhist period. A cylindrical gold ornament set with bluish garnet en cabuchon has been found in the Palatu mound which is in the neighbourhood of Charsada. The cylinder which was of copper covered with a thin lamina of gold is of design similar to the small reliquaries represented on many of the Gandhāra sculptures of human figures with a chain round the neck. This was found in Tordher a village not far from the Indus in the Yusufzai district of the Frontier Province. Two pendants were found, consisting of two separate pieces. The upper was attached to the lower by means of a hook which passed throught the hollow cylinder. The ornament attached to the framework consists of a large central flower with trefoil leaves springing from the border of its obcordate petals and with four smaller blossoms, one at each corner of the framework, united to it by means of tendril like bands.

Gems also were originally inlaid in small, blossom designs at the corners, and coloured paste or stones, probably lapis lazuli, or garnet in the trefoiled leaves which alternate between them. Fancy designs on either side of which the infant Eros is riding on a winged sea lion with four chains and bells suspended beneath him, have also been discovered.

Other smaller articles found include a round medallion hanging from

a chain, and an elaborate earring with a base and a cluster of gold drops beneath.

The *Vinaya* texts[817] mention "at first even monks used to wear earrings, ear-drops, strings of beads for the throat, girdles of beads, bangles, necklaces, bracelets, and rings."

Nearchus says earrings of ivory were only worn by very wealthy people. The only ornament referred to as worn by women alone were waistbands and anklets.[818]

The people in the Epic age used to wear ear-ornaments of terracotta and bangles of copper, shell, faience and glass. Ghaṭa-shaped beads and beads of semi-precious stones and some fine specimens of glass bangles in different colours have been found at Bhagawānpur. Five specimens of hair pins of bone and ivory are also from Bhagwānpur apart from skin and rubber articles.[819]

In the *Rāmāyaṇa* we have mentions of "their fine costly earrings of flowers and gold the hearts quickly captured of all who behold."[820]

Another reference mentions "a necklet of elephant pearls, and low hanging a garland of sweet *tulsī* flowers."[821]

This in short gives us an idea about the jewellery in vogue during the period under study. We find that men and women both enjoyed dressing in different fashions and wearing various kinds of jewellery.

Amusement and Entertainment

The Kṣatriyas led a life which was not only more varied and ostentatious but also more dissolute. They indulged in gaming, sports and the arts. For everyone, the king was the perfect example, and they all tried to imitate his way of life. Indeed it is difficult to distinguish between the Kṣatriya and the king in this sphere.

From ancient times horse-race and chariot-race have been very popular sports.[822] Even the gods appear to have enjoyed this sport. The horse race was then known as Aji Dhavana. Chariot race was a common recreation of the people. The ancient texts mention even gods indulging in chariot races to settle a dispute over priority.[823] In the famous Vajapeya ceremony the chariot-race was a usual feature.[824] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[825] refers to a winning post called *kastha* in both the horse-race and the chariot race. Usually beating of drums of bands accompanied these racing competitions. We may infer from this that possibly these practices continued

during the Sūtra period as well. Racing among men was also a source of recreation. In the description of the *upakarman* there is a description of the racers stirring up waves in the water, and that they ran a race in the eastern or northern direction until they lose their breath.[826]

Although games of chance were condemned by the Brahmanic code of conduct, all classes of people indulged in them. Numerous references in Vedic literature point to the antiquity and popularity of this game. Since the Ṛgvedic times dice play was a very popular indoor game of the Aryans. In the *Ṛgveda* it is called *akṣa*. The game of dice continued through the Vedic and later Vedic times. The Four Point was called *kṛta* in dice play and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[827] mentions *kṛta*. The Śrautasūtras prescribe the game of dice at the performance of Agnyadheya and Rājasūya sacrifices. Dicing existed in various different forms of play. [828] The dice were made of gilded shells of wooden and ivory cubes, or of a nut of the *vibhītaka* fruit[829] which was the size of a hazel nut and had five facets. The game was played with dice which were thrown on a dice board or Ādhidevana. The number of dice used in the game appears to have been pretty large ranging from forty-nine to "more than one hundred"[830] or "more than a thousand."[831] Dice of gold at the Rājasūya, a hundred and four dice,[832] at the Agnyadhana to about forty-nine dice. [833] Chess (*caturaṅga*) one of India's glorious inventions designed originally as a means of working out military strategy, was played by four players. The players used two dice and four figures—king, elephant, horse and chariot or ship, and four pawns which symbolized the four corps which traditionally constituted the army. It was almost a routine among young nobles to play this game. It was played on specially designed boards or on a table whose surface had been inlaid with precious substances representing the requisite pattern and dice were played, often on the floor. Two different dicing games are described—Vibhītaka and Pasaka. The former was a great favourite among nobles and was named after the nut from which the dice was made. Probably *Āpastamba*[834] and *Kātyāyana*[835] Śrautasūtras refer to this game while describing the winning throw as *kṛta* and an unfavourable throw as *kali*. Rudradatta commenting on *Āpastamba*[836] explains the throws thus:

> When all dice in a throw are divisible by four, it is termed as Kṛta, when three dice are left over after division by four, it is Treta; when two dice remain over, it is Dvāpara; and when the reminder is a single dice, the throw is called Kali.[837]

The Pasaka consisted of playing with three oblong dice with four scoring

sides. Probably the method of playing this game was to throw the dice on the ground and the points on the uppermost surface added up. The winning total had to correspond to any one of the combinations (usually twenty-four combinations) formerly agreed upon by the players. The amount at stake would also be agreed upon beforehand by the players. As more and more rounds were played, the stake at issue increased.[838]

The law-book of Āpastamba says that a dice board, Adhidevana and an even number of dice should be made available in the assembly hall (*sabhā*) and truthful and respectable members of the three Aryan castes may meet there and play dice. According to the commentator they pay something to the keeper of the table, and he pays to the king a regular sum for the privilege of keeping the table.[839]

The Epic heroes and nobles indulged in dicing either as a hyperbole to war or just as a source of entertainment. The more popular dicing game of these Kṣatriyas was probably the Pāsaka.The whole plot of the *Mahābhārata,* we find, revolves round this game of Pāsaka. Inspite of having lost all he had crown, wealth, self, brothers and wife, the same king assumes the role of a gambler by profession in another's court. "I shall," he says, "become a dice-mad, play-loving courtier, and with the bejewelled holders fling out the charming bryl, gold and ivory dice dotted black and red."[840] Thus we see that dicing was never really condemned, only foul play was considered a sin. The passion for gambling was so great that it reached frenzied peaks at times. An interesting statement by Āśvalāyana proves that gambling was so popular that even women indulged in it. According to the statement a girl who chooses a lump of earth taken from a gambling place should not be accepted in marriage because she will be addicted to gambling.[841]

Through the ages gambling has been considered reprehensible. In the *Ṛgveda* we find a gambler's lament and allusion to the public gaming house. The law-givers also condemn dicing: it was declared to be the first cause of impurity.[842] A dicer was to be excluded from the list of invitees to a Śrāddha feast,[843] a son is not liable for his dead father's gambling debts,[844] etc. The epic, while enumerating the sins particularly reprehensible in a warrior class mention "women, dice, hunting, and drinking."[845] However, the same gambling hall that ruined the Ṛgvedic gambler survived through all periods of Hindu growth. In fact, in the *Arthaśāstra* we find that gambling dens abounded and they were subject to strict control by the state and contributed large sums to the treasury in the shape of taxes levied on stakes,

the hiring of premises and the dice themselves. Cheats were closely watched and brought to book whenever possible. Special spies were appointed to supervise the way the gambling dens carried on business.

The status of the Kṣatriyas made it almost obligatory for them to practise arms, whether for war or simply for hunting. In general the ideal image of a Kṣatriya was that of a "warrior and brave hunter." The king always found time from his busy schedule to indulge in his favourite sport, hunting. The king went off on horseback, clad in a suitable hunting costume to protect his body and was followed by a few courtiers: "they all went out a hunting in their chariots."[846]

Lion hunting with dogs, attested by Arrian and Strabo is indicated by the *Mahābhārata* "like dogs about a lion."[847]

From the Greek writers[848] we learn that the king often departed for the chase in bacchanalian fashion. Crowds of women surround him and outside of this circle spearmen are ranged. The road is marked off with ropes and it is death for man and women alike to pass within the ropes. Men with drums and gongs lead the procession. The king hunts in the enclosures and shoots arrows from a platform in his chariot. At his side stand two or three armed women. If he hunts in the open grounds he shoots from the back of an elephant. Of the women some are in chariots some on horses and some even on elephants. They are equipped with weapons of every kind as if they were going on a campaign.

With the rise of Buddhism protection to animals was propagated. Kings like Aśoka, under the influence of *ahiṁsā* renounced personally the pleasures of the chase. This custom was certainly not followed by all the kings becomes quite evident from the fact that we have mention of superintendents of gaming and hunting.[849]

Drinking intoxicated drinks was another form of amusement. Details about the types of drinks, occasions for drinking, etc., is given in the section on food and drinks. Men and women drank freely. There were many kinds of simple wines and distilled drinks, being different for men and women, since women prefer the sweeter taste.[850] Another description of a royal picnic attests to drink flowing freely: women are said to reel from drunkenness. They "give away their jewels and their garments, play in the woods and run into the water; begin to laugh and sing and jeer and quarrel and tell each other secrets.[851]

Amorous games played a great part in the life of the young Kṣatriya. All our sources support the fact that kings were allowed a harem of unlimited

extent.[852] The existence of mixed castes and the law-giver's attempt to assimilate them into the normal course of life all point to the amorous activities of that age. Hopkins notes that women were provided for nobles and royal guests when they came to spend the night and were even furnished to priests.[853] Kṣatriyas practised chastity only as a part of student discipline.

However, these amorous activities were alternated with various intellectual and artistic activities of the aristocracy.

Music, both vocal and instrumental, held a popular place in the daily life of the nobility. They all learned to play the *vīṇā* or bow harp which is India's most ancient musical instrument. Of course we find the Gupta kings more adept at it. However the antiquity of the instrument itself shows that earlier kings also must have taken delight in it.

Most of the festive occasions were enlivened by the sweet voices of singers and the melodious notes of musical instruments. One such festival was the Mahāvrata festival[854] during which many kinds of musical instruments were played. The chanting of the *sāmans* constituted a important part of the festival. The priests chanted the necessary *sāmans* and the wives of those who participated in the *sattra* sang some of the *sāmans* after them. An eloquent description of the different instruments is found in this passage: when the *udgātṛ*[855] (priest) or a Brāhmaṇa played on a harp (*vana/vīṇā/bana*) of a hundred strings the wives of the participants played on many musical instruments specially lutes like *kandayina, godhvanikas*,[856] *aghatis* (cymbals), *pincholas* (probably flutes), and *karṇakārīs*,[857] *ghaṭakarkārīs, avaghātarikas*,[858] *tambalavīna*[859] (probably another lute); in tune with the priest. Conches or *śaṅkhas* were blown, reed pipes (*nāḍīs*) and wooden flutes were played[860] besides various joyous sounds were produced. There was a funny and frivolous dialogue between a student and teacher. Drums or *dundubhis* placed in different corners of the sacrificial place were beaten with drumsticks and an earth drum, i.e., an ox-hide stretched over a hole on the ground was sounded with the tail of the same hide. An Ārya and Śūdra performed a sham fight for a round piece of white leather and obviously the Ārya emerged victorious. Again in a comic dialogue between the Brāhmaṇa and Śūdra, the performers of the *sattra* were praised by the former but decried by the latter. Armoured Kṣatriyas equipped with bows and arrows drove a chariot round the sacrificial ground and shot arrows at a skin stretched between two posts in such a manner that the arrows just stuck to the leather but did not pierce it. A number of maidservants carried jars full of water on their heads, went

thrice round the *marjaliya* shed danced and beat the ground with their right foot and sang songs or *gāthās*.[861]

Songs and musical instruments were a part of pre-wedding rituals as well. The bride played on a reed pipe, *nāḍī*, a wooden flute (*tunava*), a *paṇava* (a type of cymbal), a drum or *mṛdaṅga* and all other musical instruments to the accompaniment of songs.[862] The bridegroom also sang a song at the time of wedding.[863] It was enjoined that a harp should be played when the bride was ceremonially sprinkled under the yoke of the chariot or cart.[864] Four unwidowed women were to play on a musical instrument called *nāḍī* at a pre-wedding rite.[865] At the Simantonnayana ceremony the wife of the sacrificer sang a song and two lute players played the lute.[866]

Painting was another favourite pursuit. It was an elegant adjunct to the love-life. By the time of Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra* this mode of exhibiting love-reached its zenith. Among the nobility youngmen and women possessed all the equipment required for artistic activity. Painting was also utilised for religious propaganda. We have references of Buddhist monks explaining the meaning of particular images with the help of a painter.[867] In the form of storied scrolls painting became a medium of conveying news.[868] Dances were also quite popular. We have references of dances being performed at a pre-wedding ceremony on behalf of the bride.[869] Perhaps certain people used dancing as a profession to earn a living because we find Gautama forbidding such professionals from attending a Śrāddha feast.[870]

These forms of amusement and entertainment must have been very popular because the king was advised to exercise full control over arms, dancing, singing and music in his kingdom.[871]

The aristocracy devoted particular attention to various literary expression. We cannot disregard their contribution to the evolution of certain cultural institutions and the growth of popular literary traditions and ideals since they themselves got education in university towns like Takṣaśilā. The kings were born and bred in an atmosphere of poetry, music and dance[872] so naturally were inclined towards there arts. Many kings were inclined towards philosophical discussions, composing, and other such religious and literary activities.[873]

The theatre which reached its peak of brilliance during the classical age in India could not have grown out of nothing. We have references to such persons as earned their living by performing on the stage and by

instructing on dramaturgy.[874] Actors probably depended entirely on royal patronage or patronage offered by some wealthy individuals. Theatrical performances probably took place only during religious and princely festivals and private or public celebrations. There were no special buildings where these performances took place.[875] It may be supposed that the actors used the halls reserved for dancing and music which were attached to most palaces and temples.

People assembled at festive gatherings called *samājas* or *samavayas* and amused themselves. However, the Sūtrakāras did not have a high opinion of these *samājas*.[876] The Jātakas on the other hand, make mention of men of varied castes and classes often meeting together at the invitation of their king. The king with the people participated in the grand feast and enjoyed with equal warmth of interest and admiration.[877] Rich establishment of dancers, musicians, minstrels, actors and actresses were managed and patronised by the state. They however were not meant exclusively for catering to the amusement and entertainment of the king and his family, but drew inspiration from "the loud and confused voices of popular acclamations, thunderous clappings and throwing away of handkerchiefs and purses by an assembly mad with joy."[878]

The news of some impending festivity drew an assortment of entertainers, like conch players,[879] drummers,[880] wrestlers, acrobats, conjurers, mountbacks, folk dancers and singers, etc.

Before a wrestling or other spectacles, a tambourine-player perambulated the entire town for about a week before to announce the event.[881] From sculptures we can construct a picture of the method of wrestling. They grappled, holding each other's shoulders, their legs entwined, while each attempted to win a fall or break the hold.[882] The winner probably received a prize in cash or kind from the king.

Acrobats showed their extraordinary talents probably to the accompaniment of an orchestra. From a bas-relief of Bharhut dating about second century BC we get a glimpse of their mastery over the art. In it is represented a team of fourteen people: seven of them with their hands raised above their heads, are supporting four others, who in their turn are gripping in their hands the ankles of two men, who are supporting a young boy in similar fashion. From the apex of this living pyramid he acknowledges the cheers of the crowd by raising his arms and waving the scarf which is the sign of his profession.[883]

The Jātakas mention other mountebacks skilled in the art of performing dances with javelins, exhibiting their skill and daring in handling four or five dangerous weapons.[884] Tight rope walkers also excited considerable excitement.[885]

Perhaps the greatest of all entertainers were the illusionists and conjurors. Some of these age-old tricks are performd even today in modern India, e.g., cutting up a body into pieces and then rejoining them. The magician usually brought the body to life by sprinkling water on it. This resuscitated person, the assistant of the magician, wore costumes of flowers and began dancing to the excitement, awe and acclamation of the crowd.[886] The other entertainers included mime dancers who had mastered the art of moving only one foot, one hand, one eye, one nostril and one half of his mouth, while the other half of the body remained motionless. The onlookers were both impressed and tickled by the sight.[887]

The others were sword-swallowers, monkey, mongoose handlers and snake-charmers. Fights between animals were also enjoyed by the people. Often money stakes were offered in such fights.[888]

Another sport of great significance was archery. We find archery contests often being part of the *svayaṁvara* ceremony.[889]

There are also descriptions of water sports. Citizens and courtesans participated in ancient *yātrās* and *goṣṭhīs*.[890] A later work, *Harivaṁśa*[891] describes a *yātrā* undertaken by the Yādavas of Dvārakā who took Piṇḍāraka to a *tīrtha* on the seashore. Kṛṣṇa had his own retinue of courtesans and the other princes had theirs. Every one took part in the water-sports. Intoxicated Balarāma sported in the ocean with wife Revatī. Kṛṣṇa frolicked with his sixteen thousand women companions. Some simply floated holding on to the boats, others imitated birds and aquatic animals. Kṛṣṇa summoned even heavenly nymphs such as Pañcacūḍā and nymphs of Kubera and Indra and ordered them to usher in the courtesans (*krīḍayuvatyaḥ*) and thus entertain the Yādavas. Large boats with cabins manned by expert pilots and small sail boats were used by the Yādavas for their sports and love games. The intoxicated Yādavas wearing fanciful costumes and ornaments sang and struck the water with their hands. The women participated fully in the revelry. On Kṛṣṇa's order they imitated the croaking of frogs and turned their clasped hands into waterspouts.

The earlier Kṣatriyas must also have indulged in such sports. especially with their women companions.

Thus we find that the Kṣatriyas with enough leisure time combined

with political and financial powers found any excuse to celebrate and hold large-scale festivities. Besides the general festivals public entertainment and celebrations the king and the nobles often spent their leisure time indulging in private regalias and personal hobbies.

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10. Ibid., IV.7.247: *Raṇeṣu kadanam kṛtvā jñātibhiḥ parivaritaḥ śāstrastraiḥ suvanirbhinnaḥ kṣatriyo vadham arhati ahave nihatam suram na śoceta kadācana nirmuktaḥ sarvapāpebhyaḥ pūto yati salokatam.*
11. Ibid., IV.7.250, cf. *Mahābhārata*, Rājadharma, XCVIII.43b.
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13. Ibid., IV.7.253: *Etat tapaśca puṇyam ca dharmaścaiva sanātanaḥ catvara āśramāstasya yo youddha na palayate*, cf. *Mbh.*, XCVIII.46b and 47a.
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400. *Gau. Ds.*, X.50.
401. Ibid., VI.11; X.60; XII.2; *Āpa. Ds.*, I.1.13.40; II.2.3.1, 4.
402. *RV*, IX.112.3.
403. Ibid., VIII.43.11; X.86.13-14; *ŚB,* III.4.1.2; *AB,* I.3.4.
404. Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop,* vol. II, p. 311.
405. *RV,* I.69.3; IV.24.4; VI.26.1; VII.79.2.
406. *Mahābhārata,* 1.64.21 f.
407. *RV,* 1.108.7.
408. *TS,* III.5.7.2-3.
409. *ŚB,* XII.7.3.8.
410. Ibid., XII.2.9.6.8.
411. *PB,* III.9.2.
412. *TS*, V.4.7.7; *ŚB,* II.5.2.34; IV.3.3.10; IX.3.1.16.
413. *SB,* IX.4.3.1.
414. *PB,* VI.10.10-11; XVIII.10.9.
415. *ŚB,* II.5.2.34.
416. Dutta, *Origin and Growth of Caste in India*, p. 37.
417. *AB,* VII.29.
418. *TB,* III.12.9.2.
419. *ŚB,* II.1.3.5.
420. *AB,* 1.28.
421. *ŚB*, XIII.8.3.11.
422. *Āpa. Ds.*, 1.1.1.18.
423. Ibid., 1.1.1.21.
424. Ibid., 1.1.1.4.
425. See *supra*, chap. 4, pp. 147 ff. (description in "The Relations between the Ruling class and the Brāhmaṇas").
426. Uddālaka Jātaka, no. 487.
427. *RV*, X.173 f.
428. Hopkins, *SMPRC,* p. 20.

429. *Mahābhārata,* 1.215.9; 12.24 11ff.; 112.19.
430. Ibid., 12.112.19.
431. Drekmeier, *Kingship and Community in Early India,* p. 37.
432. Hopkins, *SMPRC,* p. 32.
433. Manu, VII.128 ff.
434. Ibid.
435. *Arthaśāstra,* 1.12.
436. Ibid., 11.8.
437. *Arthaśāstra,* bk. II, gives the entire details.
438. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian,* Fragment XXXIII.40.
439. *Mahābhārata,* 12.87.13 ff.; *Vās. Ds.,* XIX.
440. McCrindle, op. cit., Fragment. XXXIII.39.
441. Hopkins, *SMPRC,* p. 33.
442. *Mahābhārata,* 12.87.
443. Manu, VII.129,
444. Sidhanta, op. cit., p. 178.
445. Manu, VII.128.
446. *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, 87.27 ff.
447. Ibid., 2.5.78; 13.61.25.
448. Ibid., 12.95.2.
449. Drekmeier, op. cit., p. 264.
450. *Mahābhārata,* 1.215.9; 13.61.32-33.
451. Manu, VIII.307.
452. Manu, VIII.304.
453. Drekmeier, *Kingship and Community in Early India,* p. 255.
454. Hopkins, *SMPRC,* p. 20.
455. Sen, *Studies in the Buddhist Jātakas,* pp. 129 ff.
456. *RV,* X.124.8.
457. *Atharvaveda,* III.3, vide Majumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India,* p. 94.
458. *ŚB,* III.4.1.7.
459. Majumdar, op. cit., p. 98.
460. Ibid., p. 99.
461. Tellapatta Jātaka, no. 96.
462. Cullasutasoma Jātaka, no. 525.
463. Vessantara Jātaka, no. 547.
464. Khandahala Jātaka, no. 542.
465. *Mahābhārata,* Ādiparva, 85.
466. Ibid., Udyogaparva, 149.
467. *Arthaśāstra,* VII.5.28.
468. Ibid., VII.5.27.
469. Drekmeier, op. cit., p. 49.
470. Aśoka P.E., IV.
471. *Āpa. Ds.,* II.10.26.4.

472. Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India,* p. 136.
473. Ibid.
474. Hopkins, "Position of Ruling Class in the Epic," *JAOS,* vol. XIII, p. 95.
475. Ghoshal, *History of Indian Public Life,* II, p. 35.
476. Manu, VIII.348.
477. *Arthaśāstra,* VI.1.
478. Drekmeier, op. cit., p. 85.
479. *RV,* bk. X.
480. *TS,* VII.1.1.4.
481. *ŚB,* VI.6.3.12-13.
482. Ibid., VI.4.4.12-13.
483. *Gau. Ds.*, X.50
484. *VS,* XXVI.2.
485. *RV,* VIII.19.36.
486. Dutta, op. cit., p. 55.
487. Ibid.
488. *Gau. Ds.,* IV.22; *Vās. Ds.*, IV.18.
489. *Vās. Ds.*, II.13-23.
490. *JRS,* 1901, p. 868.
491. *MN,* Discourse, 84.11.86.
492. Bhūridatta Jātaka, no. 543.
493. *MN,* II.180; Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India,* p. 91.
494. Manu, VIII.414.
495. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India,* p. 101.
496. Hopkins, *Mutual Relations of the Four Castes,* pp. 102 ff.
497. Drekmeier, op. cit., p. 37.
498. *Gau. Ds.,* XXII.14-16.
499. *Bau. Ds.,* II.1.1.8-11.
500. Ibid., I.10.19.1-2; *Gau. Ds.,* XII.14-16; *Āpa. Ds.,* I.9.24.1-4.
501. *Āpa. Ds.*, II.10.27.9.
502. Ibid., II.10.27.8.
503. *Bau. Ds.*, II.1.2.2-8.
504. Ibid., II.2.3.10.
505. *Vās. Ds.,* XVII.48-50.
506. Ibid., XVII.38.
507. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p. 128.
508. Anand, op. cit., p. 113.
509. Dutta, op. cit., p. 37.
510. Manu, VIII.348.
511. Ghosh, *The Changing Indian Civilization. A Perspective on India,* pp. 201 ff.
512. Law, *India as Described in the Early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism*, 164.
513. *Arthaśāstra,* IX.2.25.
514. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian,* Fragment LVII.

515. *Bau. Ds.*, I.8.16.8; *Vās. Ds.*, XVIII.1-6.
516. *Arthaśāstra,* III.7.20-25; 11.26.7.
517. Ibid., III.7.30.
518. Hutton, *Caste in India,* pp. 129, 132.
519. Drekmeier, op. cit., pp. 86-87.
520. O.K. Ghosh, op. cit., p. 185.
521. *AB,* VIII.2; *TS,* V.7.4; *ŚB,* VIII.2.3.11.
522. *AV,* III.19.1, VI.54.1; *TS,* IV.4.12.2.
523. *ŚB,* XIII.1.92;*TB,* III.8.13.1; *TS,* VII.5.18.
524. Majumdar and Pusalker, *The Vedic Age,* p. 451.
525. Dutta, op. cit., p. 37.
526. Majumdar and Pusalker, *The Vedic Age*, p. 386.
527. Radhakrishnan, *The Heart to Hindustan,* p. 33.
528. *ŚB,* V.1.1.12.
529. *AB,* VII.2.
530. Law, *India as Described in the Early Texts of Buddhism and Jainism,* p. 164, cf. *Arthaśāstra.*
531. *Vās. Ds.*, II.17; *Āpa. Ds.*, I.6.18.19.
532. *MN,* II.180; 95.
533. *Arthaśāstra,* VI.1.11.
534. McCrindle, op. cit., Fragment XXXIII.
535. *Vās. Ds.*, XIX.20.
536. *Mahābhārata,* 9.3.53; 5.29.
537. *Arthaśāstra,* X.3.45.
538. Mehta, *Pre-Buddhist India,* p. 136.
539. *Āpa. Ds.*, II.10.26.4.
540. Ibid., II.10.25.12-13.
541. *Arthaśāstra,* 1.8-9.
542. Ibid.
543. Ibid., 1.9.
544. McCrindle, op. cit., Fragment XXXIII.
545. B.C. Law, op. cit., p. 173.
546. *Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva, 86.26-27.
547. Law, op. cit., p. 155; Jātaka, no. 6, Jātaka, no. 467; Fick, *Social Organistation in North East India in Buddha's Time,* p. 142.
548. Sharma, *Śūdras in Ancient India*, p. 26.
549. *RV.* III.30.16; VI.26.2; 33.5.
550. *ŚB*, III.3.2.8; 9.1.6.
551. *RV,* VII.6.5; X.173.6.
552. *Gau. Ds.*, X.1-2; *Bau. Ds.*, I.10.18.2; *Vās. Ds.*, II.14.
553. Ibid., X.7-8; ibid., I.10.18.3; ibid., II.17.
554. Ibid., X.48; ibid., I.10.18.4; ibid., II.19.
555. Ibid., X.56-59; ibid., I.10.18.5; ibid., II.20.
556. Ibid., XI.56-59; ibid., II.5.10.6; ibid., II.15-16.
557. Bhūridatta Jātaka, no. 543.

558. *Mahābhārata,* 9.42.
559. *ŚB,* XIII.1.5.3.
560. Ibid., XIII.1.5.6.
561. Sidhanta, op. cit., 62.
562. *Mbhābhārata,* 8.33.
563. Sidhanta, op. cit., pp. 65 ff.
564. Dutta, op. cit., 163-64.
565. *Gau. Ds.,* VII.26.
566. *Vās. Ds.,* II.24.
567. Ibid., II.25.
568. Ibid., II.26; *Gau. Ds.,* VIII.8-21.
569. *Bau. Ds.,* II.1.2.29.
570. *Vās. Ds.,* III.25.
571. Jātaka, no. 454.
572. *Vās. Ds.,* II.48.
573. Ibid., II.40.
574. *Bau. Ds.,* I.5.10.25; *Vās. Ds.,* II.43.
575. Anand, op. cit., p. 115.
576. *Gau. Ds.,* VII.4.
577. Dutta, op. cit., pp. 61-62.
578. Ibid., p. 62.
579. Ibid.
580. *Gau. Ds.,* VII.1; *Āpa. Ds.,* II.2.4.25-28; *Bau. Ds.,* I.2.3.42.
581. Sidhanta, op. cit., p. 63.
582. *Arthaśāstra,* XI.I.
583. Jātaka, no. 531.
584. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India,* pp. 56-57.
585. Ibid.
586. Ibid.
587. *Gau. Ds.,* X.39-42.
588. *Aṅguttaranikāya,* IV.239.
589. *Arthaśāstra,* V.3.3.
590. Ibid., V.3.4.
591. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian,* Fragment LVII.
592. Ibid., Fragment I.
593. *Tai. Up.,* II.2.
594. *Mahābhārata,* 13.63.5 ff.
595. *Bṛ. Up.,* V.12; cf. *Mahābhārata,* 12.63.32, 41.
596. *RV,* I.23.15; 117.21.
597. *AV,* VIII.7.20; *VS,* XVIII.12; XXI.29.
598. *AV,* VIII.7.20.
599. *AB,* II.8.5; *TB,* III.8.15.
600. Basu, *India of the Age of the Brahmanas,* p. 58.
601. *TB,* III.8.15.

602. Basu, op. cit., p. 59.
603. *ŚB,* I.6.4.6.
604. *ṚV,* VIII.43.11.
605. Ibid., X.86.13-14.
606. *TB,* II.7.11.1; *PB,* XXI.14.5.
607. *ŚB,* III.1.2. 21.
608. Basu, op. cit., p. 59.
609. *ŚB,* III.4.1.2.
610. *AB,* 1.3.4, "*Manuṣyaraje agate nyasmin va arhati ukṣaṇam va vehatam ya kṣadantaḥ.*"
611. *ŚB,* I.6.4.3; VII.5.2.42.
612. Ibid., XI.7.2.1, "*Etadu paramamannadhyam yanmamsam.*"
613. *RV,* VIII.90.15
614. *AV,* V.19.1; VII.4.38.
615. *Gob. Gs.,* III.10.29.
616. *Sāṅ. Gs.,* II.15.2.
617. *Bau. Gs.,* II.11.65.
618. Ibid.
619. *Bau. Ds.,* II.3.6.36-37; *Gau. Ds.,* V.28-31; *Pār. Gs.,* 1.3.1-3.
620. *Hir. Gs.,* I.12.10-13; *Āpa. Gs.,* V.13, 10-13; *Kuśikasūtra,* 92, 1-11.
621. Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras.,* 1959, p. 458.
622. *Āpa. Gs.,* I.24, 26; *Par. Gs.,* I.3.29.
623. *Bau. Gs.,* II.11. 65.
624. Ram Gopal, op. cit., p. 369.
625. *Vās., Ds.,* XI.34.
626. *AV,* III.10.2.3.4.8.12.
627. *Gob. Gs.,* III.10.1-2, *aṣṭaka rātridevata puṣṭikarma. agneyi pitrayava prajāpatyartu devata viśvadeviti devata vicharā.*
628. *Gob. Gs.,* III.10.7-15; IV.4.17-20; *Pār. Gs.,* III.3.3.8; *Kāt. Gs.,* 61.3; *Sāṅ. Gs.,* III.12.2.
629. *Bau. Gs.,* II.11.51-61.
630. *Mahābhārata,* 2.4.1 ff.
631. Ibid., 4.15.8.
632. Ibid., 1.118.6 ff.
633. Ibid., 89.1.
634. Ibid., 4.72.
635. Ibid., 3.207.
636. Dutta, op. cit., p. 124.
637. *Āpa. Ds.,* I.5.16-17; *Vās. Ds.,* XIV; also vide Dutta, op. cit., pp. 124 ff.
638. *Āpa. Ds.,* I.7.21.14-18.
639. Ibid., I.9.27.
640. *Bau. Ds.,* IV.2.5.
641. Dutta, op. cit., pp. 131-33.
642. *Mahābhārata,* 12.262, 34 ff.
643. *Gau. Ds.,* XXII.18.

644. Ibid., XXI.11.
645. McCrindle, *India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian,* Fragments XXVII-XXVIII.
646. *Āpa. Śs.*, XIX.13.12.
647. Ibid., XX.11.26.1.
648. *Sāṅ. Śs.*, XIII.6.3.
649. *Āpa. Śs.*, XIV.24.12-13.
650. Ibid.
651. *ŚB,* V.1.2.10, "*Satyam, srirjyotiḥ somaḥ anṛtam pāpma tamaḥ surā.*"
652. *Gau. Ds.*, II.26; XV.15; *Bau. Ds.*, II.1.1.17-21.
653. *ŚB,* 1.2.8.1.4, *"Āpam ca va eṣa oṣadhīnām ca raso yat surā.*
654. *AB,* VIII.8.
655. *ŚB,* V.1.2.14; XII.9.1.1; *Kāt. Śs.*, XIX.1.18-20; *Āpa. Śs.*, XIX.5.7.9.
656. *Man. Gs.*, II.14.28.
657. Ibid.
658. *Viṣṇu Ds.*, XV.11.82-84.
659. Dutta, op. cit., p. 126.
660. *Arthaśāstra,* II.25.
661. *ŚB,* XIII.4.1.15.
662. Ibid., III.1.13-16.
663. *Āpa. Śs.*, VI.4.17.
664. Basu, *India of the Age of Brahmanas,* p. 54.
665. Moti Chandra, *Costumes, Textiles, Cosmetics and Coiffure,* p. 23.
666. *ŚB,* III.1.2.18.
667. Ibid., XII.7.2.11.
668. Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 23.
669. Ibid.
670. *AB,* II.11.1.
671. Ibid.
672. Basu, op. cit., p. 55.
673. *ŚB,* XIV.2.1.8.
674. *AB,* VII.33.1.
675. Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 23.
676. *ŚB,* III.4.4.25.
677. Ibid., III.4.4.24.
678. Ibid., III.4.4.23.
679. Ibid., XIII.8.4.10.
680. *ŚB,* XIII.4.3.1.
681. *AB,* VIII.38.1
682. Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 23.
683. See *infra,* chap. 7, pp. 383 ff. (description in "Royal Sacrifices").
684. *Āpa. Ds.*, I.1.2.40.
685. *Bau. Ds.*, I.6.13.10.
686. *Vās., Ds.*, II.24.
687. *Bau. Śs.*, XXV.34.

688. SBE, XLI, no. 1, p. 85; *Vedic Index,* I, p. 308; II, p. 292.
689. *Sāṅ. Gs.*, II.1.2.4.5; *Āśv. Gs.*, 1.19.8; *Bau. Gs.*, II.5.16.
690. *Kāṭh. Gs.*, 41.13.
691. *Pār. Gs.*, II.5.20.
692. *Mān. Gs.*, I.22.11.
693. *Pār. Gs.*, II.5.16.
694. *Gob. Gs.*, II.10.7
695. *Āśv. Gs.*, 1.19.10-11; *Bau. Gs.*, II.5.13.16; *Pār.Gs.*, II.5.21-24; *Mān. Gs.*, I.22.7
696. *Bau. Ds.*, I.3.5.2.6; *Vās., Ds.*, XII.14.
697. *Pār. Gs.*, II.6.25; *Kāt. Śs.*, XV.5.13.
698. *Āpa. Śs.*, XVIII.14.2-3.
699. *Bau. Śs.*, XV.15.
700. Ibid., VI.5.
701. *Āpa. Śs.*, X.9.7.
702. *Kāt. Śs.*, VII.4.7.
703. Ibid., XIV.5.3.
704. Ibid., XV.5.7-13.
705. *Bau. Ds.*, I.6.13-14.
706. *Kāt. Śs.*, XV.5.11.
707. *Pār. Gs.*, I 4.13.
708. *Āpa. Ds.*, I.1.3, 8.
709. *Bau. Ds.*, I.5.8.4.
710. *Āpa. Śs.*, V.29.3; XX.17.9.
711. *Bau. Śs.*, XVIII.48; *Lāṭ. Śs.*, IX.4.7.
712. *Vedic Index,* II, pp. 372-73.
713. *Bau. Śs.*, XXVI.32.
714. *Āśv. Gs.*, I.19.9.
715. *Gob. Gs.*, III.2.10.
716. *Gau. Ds.*, IX.9; *Āpa. Ds.*, I.11.30.10.
717. *Bau. Ds.*, I.6.13.9; *Āpa. Śs.*, XIX.16.6.8
718. Mahājanaka Jātaka, no. 539, *"Kadaham Kappasakoseyyam Khomakoṭumbaram ca."*
719. Tuṇḍila Jātaka, no. 388.
720. Mahājanaka Jātaka, no. 539.
721. Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 11.
722. Ibid., *Jātaka,* VI, p. 64.
723. Indu Prabha Pandey, *Dress and Ornaments in Ancient India,* p. 8.
724. Bhīmasena Jātaka, no. 80.
725. *Suttavibhaṅga Pacittiya*, II.2.1: *"hīnam nama sippana nalakarasippam, kumbhakarasippam, pesakara sippam, cammakarar sippam nahapitasippam,"* also vide Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 10.
726. Mahājanaka Jātaka, no. 539, Tuṇḍila Jātaka, no. 388.
727. *MN;* also vide Moti Chandra, op. cit., 10 ff.
728. *Mahāparinibbānasutta*, V.26.

729. *Jātaka,* I, p. 335; VI, p. 151; also vide Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 11.
730. *Mahāvagga,* VIII.1.36.
731. Ibid., VIII.3.1.
732. Ibid., VIII.2.
733. Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 11.
734. Ibid., p. 11.
735. *Mahāvagga,* VIII.3.1.
736. Ibid., VIII.1.29.
737. Śivi Jātaka; also vide Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 11.
738. Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 11.
739. *MN,* II.48.
740. Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 12.
741. *Mahāvagga,* VIII.1.36.
742. Pandey, op. cit., p. 8.
743. *Jātaka*, VI, p. 500.
744. *Mahāvagga,* V.10.5.7.
745. Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 12.
746. Ibid., p. 13.
747. Ibid.
748. Pandey, op. cit., p. 9.
749. *Mahāvagga,* VIII.29.1; *Cullavagga*, V.29.2.
750. *Bhikkhuṇīpatimokkha*, IV.40.96. Also vide Pandey, op. cit., 10.
751. *Jātaka*, part 3, pp. 55, 296. Also vide,Pandey, op. cit., 10; Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 14.
752. Moti Chandra, op, cit., p. 14.
753. See *Cullavagga*, V.29.4, illustration no. 4.
754. Ibid., V.29.2.
755. *Cullavagga,* X.10.1.
756. Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 12.
757. *Bhikkhuṇīpatimokkha*, IV.40.96.
758. *Mahāvagga,* VIII.13.4-5.
759. *Cullavagga,* V.20.2.
760. Ibid., V.29.2.
761. Ibid.
762. *Ācārāṅgasūtra,* 1.7.41.
763. Pandey, op. cit., p. 8.
764. *Mahāvagga*, V.2.3.
765. Ibid., V.2.4.
766. Ibid., V.7.1
767. Ibid., V.8.3.
768. *Arthaśāstra,* ed. Gaṇapati Śāstrī, p. 196. Also vide Pandey, op. cit., p. 11.
769. *Arthaśāstra,* ed. R. Shamasastry, p. 113.
770. Ibid., p. 144.
771. Ibid.
772. McCrindle, op. cit.; Strabo, XV.20.

773. *Mahābhārata,* Sabhāparvan, II.51.3.
774. Ibid., 47.3.
775. Ibid.
776. Ibid., 45.19.
777. Ibid.
778. Ibid., 47.11.
779. Ibid., II.51.13.
780. Ibid., II.51.26.
781. B.N.Puri, *India as Described by Early Greek Writers,* p. 89.
782. Arrian, *Indika Fragment,* XVI.
783. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian,* Fragment XXVII.
784. Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 17.
785. Ibid.
786. Ibid.
787. Barua, *Bharhut, Aspects of Life and Art,* pl. LVIII, fig. 63.
788. Ibid., fig. 64, see also illustration no.5.
789. Ibid., pl. LV, fig. 60, see also illustration no. 6.
790. Ibid., fig. 58.
790a. Ibid., see illustration no 7.
790b. Ibid., see illustration no. 8.
790c. Ibid., see illustration no. 9.
791. Moti Chandra, op. cit.
791a. Ibid., see illustration no. 10.
792. Barua, op. cit., II, pl. LXIV.74, see also illustration no. 11.
793. Ibid., pl. LXIV, fig. 74; pl. LXV, fig. 78.
794. Ibid., LXIII.72.
795. Ibid.
796. Ibid., XXXIX.34.
797. *SB*, XIII.2.2.18, "*Kastrasya etad rūpamyed hiraṇyam.*"
798. Ibid., XIII.4.1.8, *"Sarva niṣkiṇyaḥ alaṅkṛtan."*
799. Ibid., XIII.2.6.8.
800. Moti Chandra, op. cit., p. 10.
801. *Sāṅ.Gs.*, I.22.16-17.
802. *Vās. Ds.*, I.30; *Bau. Ds.*, I.11.20.2.
803. *Bau. Gs.*, II.10.2-8.
804. *Sāṅ. Gs.*, III.1.18; *Āpa. Gs.*, V.12.9.
805. *Āpa. Gs.*, V.12.8.
806. *Hir. Gs.*, I.10.6.
807. *Āpa. Śs.*, XX.15.9.
808. *Āpa. Gs.*, V.12; *Bau. Śs.*, XIII.32.
809. *Kāt. Śs.*, XIV.3.30 and XX.1.12.
810. Ibid., XIV.2.30; *Āśv. Śs.*, Uttarāṣṭaka, III.9.
811. *Kāt. Śs.*, XXII.18.
812. Ibid., XVI.5.1.

813. *Āpa. Śs.*, XX.2.5; *Bau. Śs.*, X.57.
814. *Kāt. Śs.*, XIV.1.23.
815. *Gob. Gs.*, III.5.16.
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822. *AB,* II.9.1.
823. *ŚB,* V.1.1.3.
824. *Kāt. Śs.*, XIV.3.21; *Āpa. Śs.*, XVIII.3-5; *Bau. Śs.*, XI.8.
825. *ŚB,* V.1.5.17.
826. *Hir. Gs.*, II.20.11.
827. *ŚB,* XIII.3.2.1.
828. Illustrated in Cunningham, *The Stupa of Bharhut,* New Delhi,1998, pl. XLV.9.
829. *Bau. Śs.*, XXII.19.
830. *Āpa. Śs.*, XVIII.19.1.
831. Ibid.
832. *Mān. Śs.*, I.5.5, 7.
833. *Bau. Śs.*, II.9-10.
834. *Āpa. Śs.*, V.20.1.
835. *Kāt. Śs.*, XV.7.18.
836. *Āpa. Śs.*, V.20.1.
837. Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasutras,* pp. 168-69.
838. Auboyer, *Daily Life in Ancient India,* p. 243.
839. *Āpa. Ds.*, II.10.25.12-13.
840. Hopkins, *SMPRC,* p. 66n.
841. Ibid., p. 67n, the materials of which the dice was made.
842. *Āśv. Gs.*, 1.5.6.
843. *Bau. Ds.*, II.1.2.8.
844. *Gau. Ds.*, XV.17.
845. Ibid., XII.41, cf. Manu, IV.74.
846. *Mahābhārata,* 3.13.7.
847. Ibid., 1.132.36-38.
848. Hopkins., op. cit., p. 63n.
849. McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian,* Fragment XXVII.
850. Auboyer, op. cit., p. 278.
851. *Mahābhārata,* 3.278.40.
852. Ibid., 1.148.5 ff.; 219.7; 222.21 ff.

853. Refer *infra,* chap. 5, pp. 278 ff. (description in "The Harem and the Courtesans").
854. Hopkins, *SMPRC*, p. 62.
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857. *Kāt. Śs.*, XII.3.21.
858. *Bau. Śs.*, XVI.21.
859. *Sāṅ. Śs.*, XVII.3.
860. *Āpa. Śs.*, XXI.17.16.
861. Ibid., XXI.17-20.
862. Ram Gopal, op. cit., p. 170.
863. *Kāṭh. Gs.*, 17.2.
864. *Pār. Gs.*, 1.7.2.
865. *Mān. Gs.*, 1.10.7.
866. Ibid., 1.9.29.
867. *Āśv. Gs.*, 1.14.6-7.
868. From the era of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty, *Aśokāvadāna,* VII; also vide, Auboyer, op. cit., p. 245.
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870. *Kāṭh. Gs.*, 22.1.
871. *Gau. Ds.*, XV.17.
872. *Āpa. Ds.*, II.10.25.14.
873. Guttila Jātaka, no. 243; Sarabhaṅga Jātaka, no. 522.
874. Refer *supra,* chap. 3, pp. 57 ff. (description in "Formal Education of the Kṣatriya").
875. *Bau. Ds.*, II.1.2.5.
876. Jain, *Life in Ancient India as Depicted in the Jain Canons*, Bombay, 1947, p. 188 (describes one but according to later sources).
877. *Āpa. Ds.*, I.1.3.12; *Vās. Ds.*, XII.40.
878. Sen, *Studies in the Buddhist Jātaka,* p. 130.
879. Ibid., pp. 130-31.
880. Saṁkhadhamana Jātaka, no. 60.
881. Bherivada Jātaka, no. 59.
882. Ghaṭa Jātaka, no. 454.
883. Cunningham, op. cit., pl. XXXV.2.
884. Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of India, Traditions of Indian Sulpture, Painting and Architecture,* London, 1954, pl. XVII.
885. Buddhaca Jātaka, no. 116.
886. Jaina, op. cit., p. 241.
887. Suruci Jātaka, no. 489.
888. Ibid.
889. Dasannaka Jātaka, no. 401.
890. See *infra,* chap. 5, "Position of Women."
891. *Harivaṁsa*, II.88.

Chapter 5

Position of Women

Women like men, are both born and made. One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman."[1] The contending forces in a civilization moulds this "second sex." During the period under consideration, we find a permanent mark of degradation impressed upon women. The position of women could be reasonably compared with the right of the millions who compose the so-called scheduled castes,[2] and the degraded communities in India. Like the scheduled caste, or the Śūdra, women have suffered long under the burden of social and religious stigmas and prejudices as well as political and economic handicaps. They have thus inherited an inferiority complex which has led to what Bertrand Russell calls their "mental prison which is not obvious to consciousness as it consists of subconscious inhibitions." Various reasons have been suggested for this degradation and the most probable ones are noted below. During this phase the Aryans were expanding their sway by conquest. Valiant fighters became the necessity of the age. In a society of aggressive war mongers mascuilinity itself came to be regarded a virtue. The "weaker" sex or the "softer" sex naturally receded to the background. It became thus a necessity to give birth to male children. The Aryans often repeated in their hymns this earnest prayer, "May we possess a family of males."[3] In the later age this eagerness for a male child continued but no longer for the increase to material or martial strength but for the necessity of being delivered from the torments of the present life by the performance of Śrāddha ceremony by the son.

Some historians suggest that the practice of parental incest arose in primitive patriarchal groups on account of the necessity of having sons in the course of their migration. However, primitive communities were

generally matriarchal or at least matrilineal and such features were foreign to the patriarchal societies of known historical times. Examples of promiscuity are recorded in the Karṇaparva specially regarding the people of Mādra country. It is stated that in that region women of Bāhlīka are a blemish on mankind. In their case it is not possible to determine the birth, and hence sisters, and not sons are the heirs.[4] The same source further states that Bāhlīka women of Sākala in the country of Mādra dance and laugh naked. They are licentious and self-willed and indulge in sexual intercourse in the open.[5] Such traditions about Mādra and Bāhlika are confirmed by other references to the existence of *strīrājya*, *strīvālya,* or *nārīviṣaya* in north-western India.[6]

On the question of promiscuity two statements in the *Mahābhārata* are decisive. Pāṇḍu refers to an age in which women were uncontrolled, licentious, self-willed and independent. They were attracted towards men even before their marriage, but this did not involve any sin to them,[7] Pāṇḍu informs us that even in his time such a practice prevailed in Uttarakuru. We may add that the Buddhist literature[8] refers to this land as a place where women were no chattel, and where there was no private property. But the most important indications of the existence of promiscuous sexual relations is to be found in the story of Uddālaka and his son Śvetaketu.[9]

An indirect allusion to a period when little value was placed on the conjugal faith in women is found in the Dharmasūtras.[10] According to Jolly, this unfavourable opinion about the fidelity of the women of eastern countries is perhaps probably a result of old accounts of Tibetan and Farther Indian tribes, among whom even now the married life is very lax.[11]

The law-givers also provide for children born out of unmarried and widowed women. Four kinds of such childredn are enumerated in the law-books. Such survivals corroborate promiscuous relations which imposed no restrictions on intercourse between men and women. With the development of a monogamous family pattern restrictions began to be imposed upon this lax life.

On the basis of these reference it is difficult to come to any definite conclusion regarding the extent and period of the prevalence of promiscuous relations. We cannot clearly determine whether this practice was confined to the Aryans or non-Aryans or to both.[12] But the fact that Mādra is singled out for condemnation may suggest that the people of the Punjab were not able to shed this practice for a long time. In any case the literary references

leave little doubt that there were traces of promiscuity in ancient Indian society.[13]

As the Vedic rituals became increasingly complicated, intensive study was required for their execution. Hence the period of study too increased and one had to be involved till the age of early-twenties which was not allowed to women. Thus the need for male issues was strengthened. In the pride of their intelligence and prejudice against women lay the barring of women from Vedic studies by the law-givers. They feared that women may not understand correctly the finer points of the knowledge and thus may pass on to the next generation, the distorted knowledge.

With the increase in the polygamous nature of the menfolk the women of the darker *varṇas* were coming in close proximity of the "white," "pure" Aryan women. This slowly led to the women being considered impure. With the growth of the Kṣatriya power leading to the establishment of monarchies with stately court life women of all castes filled the harem. Naturally orthodox law-givers could not adjust to the idea of such women taking part in religious ceremonies as equal partners. The concept of ceremonial impurity was growing. Manu in fact ordains,

> Among all (twice-born men) the wife of equal caste alone, not a wife of a different caste by any means shall personally attend her husband and assist him in his daily sacred rites.[14]

Slowly but surreptitiously the women were being relegated to oblivion. The initiation ceremony was no more allowed for women. Actually the whole series of ceremonies performed for a male child were to be performed for a female issue as well in order to sanctify her body at the proper time and in the proper order, but without the recitation of sacred texts.[15] The concept of impurity is best expressed here:

> For a woman no (sacramental) rite (is performed) with sacred texts thus the law is settled, women (who are) destitute of strength and destitute of (the knowledge of) Veda (are as impure as) falsehood (itself) that is a fixed rule.[16]

In the continuous process of conquest and subjugation, the weaker sex came to be regarded as chattel often captured forcibly[17] often given as gift. The right of owning property by women was not encouraged, in fact she had to be the property of a man. The institution of private property and the family centered round the wife, became the causations for the origin of the state, the main motive for social action. Women and property, were bracketed together—woman herself, was regarded as a sort of property.

The *Gautama Dharmasūtra*[18] cautions those who enjoy the blessings of wife and property as a matter of course. According to it, too much enjoyment of animal, land and women, is not proper.

The *Mahābhārata* declares that property and woman even if they are pursued by the accomplished, will never be steady and faithful, howsoever assiduously one may work for them.[19] Women and animal, were bracketed together. Here too there is tendency to mention women and property jointly.

Inspite of these developments, women still had some respect. Ceremonial impurity, though attributed to women, she was not entirely forbidden from participating in most sacred rituals. The sacred thread or initiation ceremony was not performed in the case of women but that did not prevent her from pursuing the study of the sacred texts e.g., Maitreyī, Gārgī, Lopāmudrā.

An Indian woman called Basusa even went to an alien land and started business there. It is stated that she kept an inn at Kish under police supervision. This was done after the subjugation of western India which was later on formed into the satrap of Hindukush and trade by sea was opened up.[20] Saṁghamitrā the daughter of Aśoka went outside India on a peace mission. Women in ancient India thus not only had freedom of movement, but they carried on their activities both inside and outside the country.[21] Brahmavādinī Sulabhā (*Mahābhārata,* Śāntiparva) travelled far and wide exchanging spiritual thoughts with scholars and finally surprised the king of Mithilā by the depth of her knowledge.[22]

Thus two contradictory opinions about women were juxtapositioned during this period. Double standards about women seems to have been the order of the day. We find that woman was at once a goddess and a slave, a saint and a strumpet.

On the one hand we find women being considered the root of all evil and always light-minded.[23] (When creating them) Manu allotted to woman (a love of) the bed, the seat and the ornament, impure desire, wrath, dishonesty, malice, and bad conduct.[24] A philosophical explanation of the evil nature of woman is given by stating that since all evil arises from birth and as woman causes birth she is responsible for all the evil of the world.[25] May be the Buddhistic concept of the cycle of birth in so far as it was considered an evil was borrowed from here. The image of woman was of one who was frivolous, always hanging on love.[26]

Nearchus states that an Indian woman of uncommon discretion would not lose her virtue for any reward other than an elephant.

He further states that Indians did not consider it any disgrace for a woman to grant favours for an elephant. On the contrary it was considered a high compliment to the sex that their charms should be deemed worth an elephant.[27]

It was promulgated that women must particularly be guarded against evil inclinations however, trifling (they may appear) for if they are not guarded they will bring sorrow on two families.[28] Women were therefore, considered unworthy of independence.[29]

Megasthenes also distrusts women. He says that wives stray from virtue unless they are compelled to be chaste.[30] He futher points out that a woman who kills the king becomes the wife of his successor.[31]

"By a girl, by a young woman or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently even in her own house."[32] Manu, Baudhāyana and others preach that

> their (women) father protects (them) in youth, and their sons protect them in old age, a woman is never fit for independence.

Because of this image women were considered unfit for any responsible work, especially political activity which was considered a masculine prerogative. Women unusally represented the continuity of the racial life, an energy which could not be divided or diverted for the fear of corresponding loss of racial vitality.

The seclusion of woman was a natural corollary to the wave of asceticism, which spread over the country in the wake of Jainism and Buddhism. Buddha also refused at first to admit his own mother Mahāprajāpati Gautamī to the Buddhist church. Later on though he gave permission to women to join the Buddhist Order he made it a rule that the Bhikkhuṇī Saṁgha, though a separate body by itself must remain for all practical purposes subordinate to the Bhikkhu Saṁgha. The Buddhists assigned a distinctly inferior position to Bhikkhuṇīs[33] because the Buddha was of the opinion that their admission to the Buddhist Saṁgha was bound to destroy its integrity and purity.[34]

Therefore the ceremony of marriage was recognised by the legislators as taking the place for women of the sacrament of initiation, their zeal in the service of their husband was more fruitful than staying with a spiritual father, and the care of the home more important than the maintenance of the sacred fire.[35] The husband became the pivot around which the woman circled. Service to their husbands was the only means of achieving bliss.

"There is no sacrifice, pious practice or fast which concerns women. In particular she must cherish and respect her husband and then will she be honoured in heaven."[36] Instead of sanctifying her by the worship of immutable perfection, Manu debased her by the exclusive adoration of a creature similar to herself and subject likewise to the weakness of humanity.[37] This adoration is well expressed when it is ordained that though destitute of virtue, or seeking pleasure (elsewhere) or devoid of good qualities (yet) a husband must be constantly worshipped as a god by a faithful wife.[38] Thus emerges a creature who is devoid of all freedom all respect and subservient to masculine ago.

However, the scene was not as desolate as it appears. Noble sentiments represent women as someone who should be respected and always protected. Kuntī says a woman should always be protected even if she does wrong.[39] Even Manu lays down...

> 'The highest duty of all castes, even weak husbands (must) strive to guard their wives.'[40] 'Women must be honoured and adorned by their fathers, brothers, husbands and brothers-in-law, who desire (their own) welfare, where women are honoured there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honoured no sacrifice rite yields rewards where the female relations live in grief. The family soon wholly perishes but that family where they are not unhappy ever prospers. The houses on which female relations not being duly honoured pronounce a curse perish completely as if destroyed by magic. Hence men who seek (their own) welfare should always honour women on holidays and festivals with (gifts of) ornaments, clothes and (dainty) food.'[41]

Here too we see that women are honoured not as an individual but in connection with the welfare of the family, thus the tone is of a passive almost brutal obedience continuously, almost leading to dishonour.

Women were however, not totally devoid of respect. They were allowed to assist at the grand oblations which the Brāhmaṇa ought to offer daily: the adoration of the Veda, the offerings to the Manes, the offerings to god and to the spirits and the duties of hospitality. No sacrament, however was to be accompanied by prayer. They had no right to offer burnt oblations,[42] or sacrifice to fire but we find that Sāvitrī endeavoured to move the gods by that sacrifice. Terrible religious austerities were undergone by the maid of Kāśī, almost like an ascetic, with the view of encompassing earthly power by religious merit. Thus, how far the rules were followed in practice one cannot be sure.

The epics, however, do not agree totally with the iniquitous law. They

reveal celebrating the sacred rites within the domestic sanctuary, retiring even with her husband to the forests[43] and maintaining a proper balance between the piety of an ascetic and the devotion of a wife and mother thus attaining *swarga* as a reward in the end. A contradictory view is also expressed in the epic which excludes women from sacrifice, feast to the manes and fasting[44] women have no *yajñakriyaḥ*, no *śrāddha*, no *upavasakam*, but their means to heaven is *bhartari ruśruṣā*. The epic poems initate us into her elegant habits. We find "numerous maidenly types a charming galaxy having no equal in any other ancient literature . . . these creations, gentle or severe, calm or exalted but pure and gracious always."[45]

Absolute seclusion of these maidens was probably popular among kings and highly placed nobles, occasionally allowing them to return to normal life by temporarily accepting the rules of the lower classes.

To get a clearer idea of the position or status of women we may proceed chronologically by studying the position through the four stages of life—girl, wife, mother, and the widow corresponding to childhood, youth, maturity, and old age.

The first stage was naturally spent in the father's home. Considering the prevailing attitude the birth of a daughter could not have been as dear as the birth of a son. The basis is well expressed in the *Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra*.[46] When he sees his son he murmurs, "From limb by limb thou art produced out of the heart thout art. Thou indeed art the self-called son so live a hundred autumns." For the girl he only kisses the head silently. Yet natural affection cannot be denied. Special religious rituals for the good luck of getting learned and capable daughters were performed,[47] in spite of the low opinion about women. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* too an unwelcoming attitude towards a female child can be observed.[48] The *Mahābhārata* gladdens one when it states some fathers love the boy more, some the girl.[49] Manu too could not ignore the natural love of parents for a child, be it a boy or a girl—one's slaves as one's shadow, one's daughters as the highest object of tenderness. Hence if one is offended by (any one of) these one must bear it without resentment.[50] Though almost all the law-givers agree that women were devoid of property rights, in practice some leniency was shown as is obvious from the following statements: Whatever may be the separate property of the mother, that is the share of the unmarried daughter alone, and the son of an appointed daughter shall take the whole estate of he (his maternal grandfather), who leaves no son.

The son is even (as) oneself (such) a daughter is equal to a son, how can another (heir) take the estate while such (an appointed daughter) who is even oneself, lives?[51]

The best description of the childhood of a girl is found in the idyllic picture of Draupadī known as Kṛṣṇā as a girl. The mature competence and the spirit of Draupadī reveals an exceedingly well instructed childhood. Much of this knowledge she gleaned, sitting on her father's lap. "This I learned (in childhood) as a sage priest taught it to my brother, while I sat on my fathers lap and listened.[52] That father did not totally neglect the girl's education in the epic period becomes quite obvious." Draupadī who displayed her intellectual abilities on more than one occasion,[53] e.g., in the gambling scene, during a grand discussion on the question of fate, involving subtle questions of human and divine power, inciting speeches leading to Bhīma's vows.

Similarly, Śakuntalā argued eloquently with Duṣyanta, Devyānī discussed on an equal footing with her father Kaca or Śukra, and husband Yayāti. The two ladies of the Upaniṣads already mentioned— Gārgī and Maitreyi—also throw some light on the question of the education of the Kṣatriya women. Women were also taught to dance and sing.[54] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* refers to it. Manu lays down that no father who knows (the law) must take even the smallest gratuity for his daughter, for a man who through avarice takes a gratuity is a seller of his offspring.[55] This probably was enjoined upon because young girls were given away for a price.

Whatever examples we have are too meagre to state categorically that young girls were educated. Buddha also allowed women to join the Saṁgha and indulge in spiritual activities but not without prejudice.[56] We do find wandering Bhikkhuṇīs or nuns preaching and taking part in spiritual discussions but they were always considered inferior to the monks.

There is little else to be said about a girl's childhood or the girl before marriage.

Marriage, in fact, was a religious necessity for both the man and the woman. Neither of them could achieve *swarga* or heaven without being accompanied by the duly married consort. Thus, theoretically the position of the wife was one of honour in the family and she was recognised as the joint owner of the household. Marriage was meant to perpetuate caste distinctions but it also had the inherent defect of confounding the caste if total freedom was allowed. Thus it brings us to the question of who one

could choose as his spouse and what was the method of selection.

The legal law laid down:

> Let him wed a female free from bodily defects, who has an agreeable name, the (graceful) gait of a Hamsa or an elephant, a moderate (quantity of) hair on the body and on the head, small teeth and soft limbs.[57]

Manu also lists whom not to marry.[58] However, one had to choose such a woman from one's own caste, as maintaining the purity of blood in perpetuating the family was of the utmost importance. The ancient sage singers have declared that the man who unites himself to the woman is born again in her children. From this comes the title of mother, *jayā* for the spouse. If a son is born to a man faithful to the laws of his creed, he saves it by perpetuating his race.[59] This concept of maintaining the purity of blood led to the growth of the idea of virginity which, combined with the social ideal of monogamy, contributed towards early marriages. But in the period under consideration early marriages do not seem to be the rule as in later times. However, the concept was growing as is obvious from certain scattered references.

> A man aged thirty years shall marry a maiden of twelve who pleases him or a man of twenty-four a girl of eight years of age. If (the performance of) his duties would (otherwise) be impeded[60] (he must marry sooner).

Uttarā was not above the age of playing with dolls when she was married to the young hero Abhimanyu of the *Mahābhārata*.

The rule that a man may not marry a woman of a higher caste held good, but the rule that a man may not marry a woman of lower caste was restricted only to the choice of his first wife. If a twice born man wed a woman of his own and later of other (lower) castes the seniority, honour and habitation of those (wives) must be settled according to the order to the castes (*varṇa*).[61] Thus four wives, three wives, two wives, and one wife was allowed to the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra respectively.[62] Whether the Śūdra woman could become a legal wife has been touched upon while discussing the social condition. The point, however, is that much against the will of the law-givers such marriages took place and the only way to excuse them was to proclaim that such wives imbibed the good qualities of their husbands and thus became honoured, e.g., Akṣamālā, a woman of the lowest birth being united to Vasiṣṭha, and Saraṅgī being united to Mandapāla, were worthy of honour. Similar sentiments are expressed in the following verse too:

> These and other females of low birth have attained eminence in this world by the respective good qualities of their husbands.[63]

Sumitrā, one of the wives of king Daśaratha of *Rāmāyaṇa* hailed from a rich Vaiśya family. Violating the Brāhmaṇical law Siddhārtha (Lord Buddha) declared himself willing to seek even among Śūdras a wife gifted with the moral qualities that he required.[64] Some legends show that the offsprings of such intercaste marriages (wives from the Śūdra caste) were held in esteem.The most striking example being Vidura, born of slave woman. Thus the custom of intercaste marriages specially among the Kṣatriyas was not unusual.

This, combined with the need of male posterity, was destined to lead to plurality of wives. "Over-marrying" was first admitted for the Kṣatriyas probably because it was not possible for a priest to extend the religious privileges of a housemistress to many wives, and for the ordinary man of the people's caste it was not possible to maintain the ruinous expenditure of a gynaeceum. To the rich nobles or Kṣatriya aristocracy the mateial expenditure did not much matter. Besides they were not so particular about their religious rights and rites.

This polygamous nature was further encouraged and sustained by the different forms of marriages allowed which we shall discuss later.

Polygamy it was said was not wrong but polyandry was contentious. This was probably an un-Aryan custom because considering the male chauvinism of the Aryans it is quite doubtful if they would have allowed their women many husbands. However, certain references do prove the existence of the system. The chief woman character in the epic, Draupadī, had five husbands.

We have references in the epic to the freedom of women. Women were not restricted in their movements, they were free to roam. Even after marriage they could live with another man and it was not considered *adharma*.[65] To sanctify Draupadī's polyandry older examples of Jaṭilā Gautamī who had seven husbands and of Vārkṣī who married the ten brothers of Pracetasas,[66] were cited.

The particular form of polyandry prevalent during this epoch was connected with the principle of levirate and "Niyoga." This principle throws light on the status of the wife in that it shows that the primary aim of marriage was to beget offspring. In the epic, Pāṇḍu says childless people cannot go to heaven, I am childless.[67] It was believed every human being is born with four debts, a debt to his father, to the gods, to the *ṛṣis* and to

human beings. Giving birth to a son alone can release one of the debt to the father.[68] For this he delivers the soul of his father from the infernal sojourn called *put*. A son is called *putra*[69] and for a king, a son is more important as an heir. The law-books[70] also ordain that on failure of issue (by her husband) a woman who has been authorised may obtain (in the) proper (manner prescribed) the desired offspring by (cohabitation with) a brother-in-law or (with some other) *sapiṇḍa* (of the husband). Dīrghatamā's[71] and Śvetaketu's[72] proclamations ordaining that women should live with only one man, after his death; or that when he is alive the wife cannot live with another man, probably reflects the polyandrous nature of the women.

Here we must mention that marriage of a brotherless girl was looked upon adversely. This was so becuse a daughter could not offer *piṇḍa* to her father but her son could, therefore the husband of such a girl would not get the first *piṇḍa* it would go to the maternal grandfather.[73]

Since the women were usually married at a mature age the question naturally arises how far they were free to choose their husbands. This necessitates a discussion of the forms of marriage. Eight forms of marriage were allowed by law—Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa, Prajāpatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rākṣasa, and Paiśāca.[74] The Kṣatriyas could marry according to the first six forms. Kings could marry by the Rākṣasa method as well. The eight forms of marriage can be further shortlisted into three groups—by the payment of a price for the bride, by mutual consent of bride and bridegroom, and by abduction of the bride. References such as the king of the Mādras who refused to give his sister to a suitor who though acceptable could not pay a fee for the bride, and Gādhi, who would not give his daughter to Ricika, until a fee was paid,[75] show the prevalence of the system. However this system was repeatedly condemned. Manu says even a Śūdra ought not to take a nuptial fee, when he gives away his daughter, for he who takes a fee sells his daughter, covering (the transaction with another name).[76] Those who resisted the rule tried to make the fee look more like a gift. Dowry paid to a daughter or son-in-law was quite prevalent. In the royal marriage the amount gifted was quite handsome.[77] But we find another aspect of the giving. The father gives an unpledged sum to the suitor to wed his daughter. Since it was not possible for all families to overlook this sum private and small families retained it, whereas the aristocrats and upper classes considered it degraded, old fashioned system.

Coming to the question of mutual consent, we have many examples in

the marriages of Devyānī with Yayāti, Śakuntalā and Duṣyanta. In such marriages, caste was often overlooked. Manu could not ignore the prevalence of mutual choice, therefore he laid down:

> Three years let a damsel wait though she be marriageable, but after that time let her choose for herself a bridegroom (of) equal (caste and rank).[78]

Such marriages were often contracted without witnesses or without any civil or religious consecration hence they could easily be denied, as we see Duṣyanta denying them until proved by Śakuntalā.

A very important variant of this from was the *svayaṁvara*. Here the bride formally chose her husband from among a number of assembled suitors. Eligible princes were invited by the father of the bride to an assembly from among whom the bride selected her future consort by placing a garland round the neck of the prince of her choice. After this the marriage rites were celebrated with all pomp and ceremony. This was how Nala was chosen by Damayantī and Pṛthā selected Pāṇḍu.

We should distinguish between this form of *svayaṁvara* and the other where during the brilliant festivals of the tournament, the maiden promised her hand to the wielder of a bow hard to bend or any other such feat, thus becoming a prize of valour. Both the epic heroines Sītā and Draupadī were won by this method.[79] In such a case the bride was not really free to choose. Anybody, whoever, performed the deed successfully had to be accepted. However, she could disapprove of a person taking part in the competition as Draupadī excluded Karṇa on the basis of caste.[80] She shuddered at the thought of staining the purity of her race by marrying the son of a Suta. We can almost say with certainty that this form of marriage was meant only for Kṣatriyas. In the *Mahābhārata* Bhīṣma says that the Kṣatriyas praise and believe in the *svayaṁvara* because the law-makers ordain that maidens won after defeating the opponents are the most auspicious wives for the Kṣatriya.[81] We can compare this with other statements like marriage by *svayaṁvara* is said to be the proper marriage for Kṣatriyas.[82] The *svayaṁvara* form is highly praised by Kṣatriyas.[83] According to the Śruti, the *svayaṁvara* is for the Kṣatriyas. This probably incites the Kṣatriyas to protest against Arjuna who is disguised as a Brāhmaṇa, from taking part in the archery competition for winning Draupadī. However, in spite of the protests alomost ending in a fight, Arjuna wins Draupadī, whereas the same Draupadī had severe objections against Karṇa because of his low birth. Therefore does this prove two things, i.e., the two upper castes were

closer in all respects and secondly that probably besides the Kṣatriyas, others also took part in such *svayaṁvaras*?

The discussion on *svayaṁvara* would not be complete without referring to the one Gautama Buddha took part in. When the youth Siddhārtha had selected his wife, the father of the bride objected to getting his daughter married right away. He said, "The royal youth has lived in idleness in the midst of the palace, and it is a law in our family only to give our daughters to men clever in accomplishments and never to those who are strangers to them."[84] He set up a competitive test and Siddhārtha was obliged to enter the lists with five hundred young men of the Śakyas. This sort of *svayaṁvara* had a higher character than the other ceremonies of the kind whose memory the epic poems have preserved. The princes strove not only with their physical address and power, but also with their learning and intelligence and in bodily as well as mental exercises. But Siddhārtha conquered his rivals.

The winning of a wife by prowess in a contest was at times explained as a Vīryaśulka or feat of bravery. We find this mentioned in a later text *Agnipurāṇa* when explaining Rāma's case.[85]

Prof. R.S. Sharma[86] points out that in some parts of India, the term "Gandharva" now denotes remarriage among lower classes which clearly suggests that it was practised by them in the past as well. Thus it seems that in early times when class distinctions were not rigid and hence motives of birth and money not so important the Gandharva marriage prevailed among the Kṣatriyas and others, but later, the permission of it for the Kṣatriyas may have been used by the princes and the nobles as camouflage for their licentious affairs, leading to polygamy. In the later period this form of marriage contemplates love overtures and initiative on the part of the Kṣatriya princes, but not on the part of the Kṣatriya princesses of which there is hardly any example. However, as the class developed a new sense of prestige and respectability, such practices fell into disuse among them.

Since the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas were charged with the responsibility of upholding the social order, dharma, it was essential that they should observe the approved forms of marriage. And as would appear from Baudhāyana, there were compelling economic reasons for it. Discussing the suitability of various kinds of marriage for various caste's he clearly states that because of their preoccupations with agriculture and service the wives of Vaiśyas and Śūdras cannot be kept under control.[87] This suggests that the employment of lower castes in the primary task of

production makes it necessary for their women to participate in it, and thus slackens the bonds of dependence upon their husbands, but the withdrawal of upper castes from the producing activities, and the consequent non-participation of their womenfolk in them makes the latter comparatively more dependent upon their male partners.

Finally, to come to the form where the bride was forcibly captured. This was the Rākṣasa or Kṣatra for, probably the earliest method recognized for the warriors, that is, simple robbery. Arjuna wins Subhadrā by this method and Kṛṣṇa thinks it to be a very proper Kṣatriya form. As noted earlier Bhīṣma also abducted Kāśirāja's three daughters. In such marriages naturally the ceremonies were performed later.

Coming to the wife's position one is struck by the shining aureole with which she was crowned. The descriptions of such feminine grace, such elevation and such purity, beauty and delicacy could not have been mere imaginations. The husband's chief duty towards his wife was to keep her pleased and amused that she may be a cheerful "lamp" in the house. To keep her busy, the husband should employ her in the collection and expenditure of his wealth in keeping (everything) clean, in (the fulfilment of) religious duties, in (the preparation of) his food and in (looking after) the household utensils.[88] The spouse was an object of honour in the house. It was she who brought up the children. The wife was the breath of life to her husband, she was all devotion to her husband. She was the half of man, she was for him the best of friends, without her the house was like a dreary forest, the wife was the source of perfect well-being, she was the root of the family and of its perpetuity. Men who had wives accomplished well the sacred ceremonies and fulfilled the duties of the head of the house, men were filled with joy and the happiness of salvation was assured to them. Wives were as friends in the wilderness giving consolation by their gentle discourse, they were like fathers in the serious duties of life,they became like mothers in times of misfortune. Wives were a succour to the traveller forsaken in wild solitude. Whosoever had a wife was sure of support. A devoted wife followed her huband—if she died first, she waited ceaselessly, expecting her husband and if the husband died before she followed him even in death. Although irritated by an insult, the man must never give pain to his wife who had been his constant companion and his delight, on whom depended his joy and happiness and fulfilment of duties. They were considered the constant and sacred source of life for even the *ṛṣis* could not have given birth to a child without them. When a son, even if all covered

with dust, ran towards his father and embraced him what greater pleasure could there be?[89] The orthodox law also states, "Then only is a man perfect when he consists of three persons united, his wife, himself and his son;" thus have the learned Brāhmaṇas announced, "The husband is even one person with his wife."[90]

Wives had the right of sharing a penance with their husband, as we see both in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. Wives follow their husbands to the woods to do penance with them.[91] The ideal devotion of a wife is well exemplified in the following verses:

> Separated from thee I should not wish to dwell even in heaven. I swear it to thee noble child of Raghu, by thy love and by thy life! Thou art my lord, my guru, my way, my very divinity; with thee then shall I go, it is my final resolve.[92]
>
> Paradise without thee would be an abode odious to me, and even hell with thee cannot be otherwise than a favoured heaven. My father, my mother, and all my relations, worthy child of Raghu, did they not leave me in thy hands, giving me this precept? Thou oughtest not to have any other habitation but thy husband's. . . . Besides is not devotion to a husband the way to salvation? The wife who sacrifices herself to her husband in this life, will enjoy eternal felicity with him above. Why should Rāma deprive his partner of happiness upon earth and of glory in heaven? She will die if he forsakes her. . . .[93]

In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,*[94] the wife shares with her husband in sacrifices. Manu also enjoins to be mother were women created, and to be father men. Religious rites, therefore are ordained in the Vedas to be performed (by the husband) together with the wife.[95]

How far this idyllic picture of companionship between the husband and wife was the actual situation one cannot categorically say because the relationship was still evolving during the period under consideration. As Hopkins had pointed out it was no woman worship but man worship that prompted this honour to woman as wife. For it is the incarnate husband that makes the wife glorious. The husband is the protector, he is the woman's god.[96] Similar sentiments are expressed in the following statements: "Without a wife the house is empty" or like "A dreary forest;" "A man's highest good is a wife;" "There is no medicine equal to a wife, no friend like a wife, no refuge like a wife;" "One's wife is a friend given by God;" "Happy are those that have wives, the highest good;" "Revered are women, sacred lamps in the house;" "Wives are the joy of a house."[97]

It was, in fact, by the woman, the mainstay of the family, that caste was perpetuated and the Brāhmaṇical edifices sustained. Women were probably

glorified for the wrong reasons, i.e., to perpetuate their suppression and elevate the hold of the patriarchal society to retain the dominance of men. Women were praised for their unique capacity for patience, for suffering, for unselfishness, and the ability to submerge their personality for the common good of the family. They were reduced to echoes of what their husbands said. Thus though the Kṣatriya women were glorified as wives, they had no individuality of their own.

It was maternity alone that completed wifehood. It was only as a mother that the highest honour was granted to a woman. She was considered as holy as the father was and the children obeyed her as they obeyed their father. The teacher (*ācārya*) was ten times more venerable than a sub-teacher (*upādhyāya*), the father a hundred times more than a teacher, but the mother a thousand times more than a father.[98] The mother was an object of great reverence. The epic *Mahābhārata* gives us the story of Kuntī, the mother, whom the Pāṇḍavas obey without question. A casual remark of her led to Draupadī's polyandrous marital status because a mother could not be disobeyed. But in the same family, we find Duryodhana paying no heed to his mother's good counsel about abstaining from war which ultimately led to his death. This however can be analysed in two ways—one, as that a mother was not so important and her words need not be followed. Secondly, it proves that if one disregarded one's mother then downfall was certain. The epic, however, abounds with noble thoughts about the mother. "The son who does not protect his widowed mother suffers disgrace."[99] Similar sentiments are echoed in the law-books as well. Reprehensible is the son who does not protect his mother after her husband has died.[100] There is no shelter or refuge like the mother, none so dear as she.[101] By serving the mother with regularity one attains the regions of felicity in the next life.[102] The mother was entrusted with the education of her children. "The bringing forth of children, their nurture and the daily superintendence of domestic affairs, such are the duties of wives."[103] Thus the mother was considered an embodiment of perfection, otherwise how could she train men? The authority of the father and mother were jointly exercised in all precepts of family relationships. The child, even when grown up was advised to bestow upon the authors of his being tokens of equal obedience, equal respect and equal love.[104]

This love and honour for the mother was not limited to her alone, it extended to the maternal relations as well. The female relatives (have power) over the world of the *apsarasas*, the maternal relative over that of the waters,

the mother and the maternal uncle over the earth.[105] A maternal aunt, the wife of a maternal uncle, a mother-in-law and a paternal aunt, must be honoured like the wife of one's teacher.[106] We have seen earlier in the chapter on society, the significance of the maternal uncle. This ostentatious respect for the mother is probably a very Indian characteristic. The cult of the mother is still prevalent in modern Indian society and finds expression in various religious and social customs.

The respect given to women is obvious when Mantharā is punished by Śatrughna:

> 'Throws her down, drags her in the dust . . . he was about to strike her . . . Bharata stops him, one must not kill a woman.' 'Restrain thine anger, o thou who knowest thy duty! Her guilty action has already killed the wretch; reflect that she is subject to the will of another, that she is infirm, and above all that she is a woman.'[107]

A discussion of the position of the Kṣatriya women cannot be complete without a consideration of her property rights. The Brāhmaṇical literature usually does not allow the women inheritance.[108] However, Manu and certain Sūtrakāras recognise some kind of property rights. They ordain that only after the death of both the father and the mother can the brothers divide among themselves equal shares of the paternal and maternal estate, for they have no power (over it while the parents live).[109] Manu further points out that what (was given) before (the nuptial fire) what (was given) on the bridal procession, what was given in token of love and what was received from her brother, mother or father that is called the sixfold property of a woman.[110] That women possessed some property becomes clear also from the laws that the property of a woman married according to the Brāhma, the Daiva, the Ārṣa, the Gāndharva or the Prajāpatya rites (shall belong) to her husband alone if she dies without issue: whereas the property of a woman married according to the Asura form or any other blamable form, will belong to her mother and father if she dies without issue.[111]

Kauṭilya also lays down some property rules.[112] However, as earlier mentioned, women were slowly debarred from holding any property. The above mentioned rules probably related to the property got as gift by women. A Kṣatriya woman in the role of queen was allowed to draw a salary.[113] The widows of the Kṣatriya soldiers were also provided with a pension. The king was enjoined to

> protect and care for the barren women, for those who had no sons, for those whose family was extinct, for wives and widows faithful to their lord and for women afflicted with disease.[114]

Thus, once again the ambivalent attitudes of a changing era becomes obvious. On the one hand, women were denied property, and on the other, provisions were being made for their care.

According to Kauṭilya, the property of a woman consists of (1) *strīdhana*—means of subsistence of above 2,000 *paṇas* and jewellery, (2) *āhitadhana*—compensation she may receive for allowing her husband to remarry, (3) *śulka*—money which her parents may have received from her husband.[115] The bride price or *śulka* was usually received by the father, or the mother if the father was dead, or by the maiden herself if both her parents were dead. On the death of a husband, a chaste woman was to receive the *strīdhana* as well as the *śulka* if there was any due to her. A woman could marry a second time and retain all that she received from her father-in-law and her husband, but only on the condition that she married somebody of her father-in-law's choice.[116] Inspite of owning property women were not free to use it according to their will. A woman was allowed to use her endowments and jewellery in maintaining her son, daughter-in-law or herself if her absent husband had made no provision.[117] Thus women were the custodians of property and could use it only to ward of calamities or hardships. On her death the woman's kinsmen could take the property. The sons and daughters were allowed to divide the property among themselves. If there were no sons the daughters could take it.[118] If a woman had a son, she could not use her *strīdhana* according to her needs because the son was entitled to inherit it. If however, she claimed the property on the plea of looking after her sons she had to endorse it in their names.[119]

Thus though on paper the women possessed property, actually they had no legal rights over it. They could not bequeath it to anybody of their choice. Manu also voices a similar opinion but in harsher terms. He says wives like sons and slaves can have no property of their own and whatever they have or acquire belongs to their masters.[120] Baudhāyana allows daughters to inherit their mother's jewellery or ornaments.[121] However, Baudhāyana's commentators go a step further by acknowledging the daughters' hereditary rights over certain articles belonging to their mother and grandmother. Manu acknowledges the grand-daughter's claim over the grandmother's property.[122]

This brief description of the property rights of women shows clearly that it was mainly as a widow that the woman had need of the property. The position of widows in ancient India is a topic rigged with many

controversies especially over the question of remarriage of widows.

The orthodox law-makers prescribe a rather strict and lofty ideal for the widows. They were to remain chaste and perform mortifications of flesh by discarding all pleasure and living only on roots and fruits.[123] Manu says in the sacred texts which refer to marriage the appointment (of widows) is nowhere mentioned, nor is the remarriage of widows prescribed in the rules concerning marriage.[124]

Kauṭilya, however, gives legal recognition to remarriage of widows provided she marries the man of her father-in-law's choice.[125] There was no legal disability regarding her property rights in such cases. She had to forfeit her property when she married according to her own choice ignoring the choice of her father-in-law.[126] By limiting the widow's choice, Kauṭilya was probably hinting at the custom which allowed a woman to marry her brother-in-law. In the *Mahābhārata* also we get a reference to this custom.[127] The same idea is probably reflected when Āpastamba says a girl is married to the family. Here he may be alluding to the custom of the claims of the brothers over the wife of the deceased brothers.[128]

Gautama and Manu[129] both bar the son of a remarried woman from attending the Śrāddha ceremony. Thus by refusing to accept the respectability of the son of a twice married woman, they refuse to honour her as well.

The question of respect for the son of a widow by her second marriage naturally leads us to the custom of Niyoga. The early Dharmasūtra writers[130] and the *Mahābhārata* prescribe the custom for childless young widows. In fact there is no regulation regarding limiting levirate to any particular *varṇa*. Most of the examples so far available of this practice relate to the Kṣatriya princesses and occasionally to the Brāhmaṇas.[131]

Manu however, vacillates in his opinion regarding the system of Niyoga. On the one hand, he allows the widow to cohabit with her brother-in-law or a *sapiṇḍa* to get a son.[132] He also allows such a son to inherit the property of his mother's first husband.[133] On the other hand, Manu looks with disfavour upon the practices and does not allow the twice born man's widow to indulge in such a practice.[134] He claims that such a woman is a disgrace in this world as well as the next.[135]

This kind of vacillation is a natural outcome of a commingling of traditional views with reformist ideas which was common in the period under consideration.

Coming now to the custom of Satī, i.e., burning the widows on her

husband's funeral pyre, we find that it was not so common in that period. The most famous example found in the *Mahābhārata* is that of Pāṇḍu's beautiful wife, Mādri, who immolated herself after entrusting her two sons to Kuntī, Pāṇḍu's first wife.

The custom was probably confined to the Kṣatriya caste because it was among them that the sense of possession and love for a good faimly name was the strongest.[136] Altekar also quotes from the *Bṛhaddevatā* to show that Satī was limited to, and valid for, only the Kṣatriyas.[137]

It is difficult to pin-point the origin of Satī. It is a conjecture that it was an Indo-Germanic custom by which the wife had to die with her dying husband in order to provide the deceased with one dear to him.[138] It is also said that perhaps, the practice originated from the primitive belief that life after death is a continuation of the present life subject to the same material needs.[139]

There is however no convincing evidence to show that the Aryan immigrants to India had practised this custom. It is not mentioned in the *Avesta*.[140] The funeral hymns of the *Ṛgveda* do not mention it either.[141] A Ṛigvedic verse frequently cited in support of Satī exhorts the woman to come forward to anoint the corpse before it is consigned to flames and then step into the house tearless and without affliction.[142] She is positively guided to return to the world of the living after fulfilling her wifely duties to the dead husband.[143] Vedic literature says that the widow should be brought back, allowed to remarry and live a happy and prosperous life.[144]

One theory holds that Satī was originally a Scythian rite introduced from Central Asia.[145] Yet another holds that it was a pre-Aryan custom, a theory based on archaeological findings discovered in the Lothal site of the Indus Valley culture in western India. Some graves unearthed there contain skeletons of paired bodies, one male and one female in each grave.[146]

However, it is clear that the custom had acquired no root in Indian soil until the post-Buddhist era. The Śtrīparva of the *Mahābhārata* depicts the performance of the Śrāddha ceremony of the departed Kaurava heroes by their widowed wives.[147] This shows that the practice though known was still rare.

Early Smṛti writers like Yājñavalkya are reticent about it. Manu prefers strict celibacy for widows[148] but nowhere does he advocate self-immolation as an alternative. It would therefore appear that there existed no early religious sanctions to this observance.[149] A progressive deterioration of

the position of women was witnessed in the later Vedic age. She was classed with wine and dice as one of the three evils.[150]

The unsympathetic attitude of society towards widow remarriage[151] which had Vedic sanction threw women into further constraints. Thus N.K. Dutt rightly states that

> the introduction of Satī is only logical corollary to the prohibition of widow remarriage and maintenance of a high standard of womanly chastity.[152]

Till 300 BC it was not recognised by any jurist nor did it have any Vedic sanction.[153] One notices that the custom of Satī began to acquire popularity because of its sustained and growing glorification by such celebrities as Vātsyāyana,[154] Varāhamihira,[155] and Kālidāsa.[156] The syastematic glorification of the custom, the promise of the attainment of heaven, the prospect of liberation of the husband from earthly sins, and finally union with him in the nether world and ultimate salvation[157] collectively galvanised a widow to prefer self-immolation to a life of humiliation. A woman thus became a victim to her own illusions about Satīhood.

It was held that the earliest epigraphic reference to Satī was the Eran inscription of Goparāja discovered in Madhya Pradesh. Its date is around AD 510 and it records the performance of the rite by the royal wife when he was slain by the Hūṇas. However this theory has been refuted in the light of the Nanduru Pot inscription of the third century AD found in the Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. This one records that one Pustikā, wife of Ayamani, committed *sahagamana*.[158]

Though Indian writers do not dwell on this custom much in their literature, Greek historians mention it. That in a polygamous society women vied for being selected for Satī was first mentioned by Greek historians.[159] According to them, the women preferred to believe in life after death with a husband than to lead a life of disgrace as a widow. Onesikritus,[160] however, also maintains that the custom was confined to the Kathians. It was practised mainly by Kṣatriya women, because being warriors and fighters, Kṣatriya men died more frequently and women were faced with frequent widowhood.

The non-mention of this custom by Megasthenes perhaps proves that the custom was confined to the Kṣatriyas in Punjab and was later introduced to northern India. This may also be the reason why Indian writers have also made only casual references to the custom.

Some passages extracted from the Purāṇas refer to the custom. Kṛṣṇa

commanded the widow not to survive her husband and indicated what preparations should precede the act,

> The faithful wife upon hearing of her husband's death having thus devoted her life should purify herself from all impurity according to the words of Hari. She should wear garments dyed red with Kusumbha, with a border of silk, she should adorn her person with flowers, betel leaves and saffron and kajal, with garlands and chaplets of sweet scented flowers and with various other ornaments. Then the faithful wife should select four young women living under their fathers care and compliment them with presents suitable to their youth, of vermilion, garlands of flowers, bracelets, sandalwood paste and collyrium. She should also with due attention make offerings to the aged father and mother of her deceased husband, to the Brāhmaṇas, to her children, grandchildren and other relations.[161]

The description of king Pṛthu's young and delicate wife who followed him in his retreat and then in his death also alludes to Satī.[162]

Thus it appears that the system was not yet a compulsory custom. It was not as prevalent and most of the references show the maidens immolating themselves out of their own free choice. No system of coercion existed then.

The discussion on the position of women cannot be complete without a few lines about what we today call divorce. Though (a man) may have accepted a damsel in due form he may abandon (her if she be) blemished, diseased or deflowered and if (she have been) given with fraud.[163] Similarly, the woman who shows aversion towards a mad or outcaste (husband), an eunuch, one destitute of manly strength or one afflicted with such diseases as punish crimes, shall neither be cast off nor be deprived of her property.[164]

Kauṭilya however, does not permit divorce in the case of the first four approved kinds of marriage.[165] Both Kauṭilya and the law-givers prescribe different periods of waiting correlated to the different castes before remarriage could be attempted.

According to Kauṭilya, a Brāhmaṇa's wife without children should wait for four years, a Kṣatriya woman for three years, a Vaiśya for two and the Śūdra for one year before considering remarriage, if the husband went on a journey and did not return after promise. On the other hand, for a wife with children or she who has been provided with means of livelihood the period of waiting is extended but the difference between the different castes is maintained.[166]

Vasiṣṭha lays down that a Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya woman with children should wait for the husband for five years. A Vaiśya for four years and a

Śūdra for three years. If the woman was without children, the period of waiting for the husband was reduced by one year. After the period of waiting they were supposed to live with those who were united with their husband by interest or by birth or by the funeral cake or by water libation or by descent from the same family, in preference, for while a member of the family is living, the woman should never go to a stranger.[167]

Manu echoes the same idea of waiting with some variation. If the husband went abroad for some sacred duty (she) must wait for him eight years, if (he went) to (acquire) learning or fame six (years) if (he went) for pleasure three years.[168] In the case of the husband, Manu ordains, for one year let a husband bear with a wife who hates him: but after (the lapse of) a year let him deprive her of property and cease to cohabit with her.

All the writers agree on one point, that a woman could annual a marriage if the husband became an outcaste.

From this brief description it becomes clear that though absolute subservience and fidelity were advocated in a marriage, both husband and wife were allowed some kind of freedom in annulling an unhappy marriage.

A few words about the position of women in Buddhist society would help us to understand this topic better. Whether Buddhists, pre- or post-Vedic the position of women in a conservative climate like that of India could be not be very different. In Buddhist times, there were marginal improvements in their religious condition, primarily due to the basic principles which Lord Budha laid down in his teachings. Lord Buddha considered men and women equal for reaping the fruits of their past *karma*. Therefore, the distinction made between a son and daughter in the pre-Buddhist period was annulled and this raised the status of a daughter.[169]

The Buddha opposed the Brāhmaṇic rituals, wherein women was denied a primary role and a childless women or a widow was provided no place. This attitude removed the unwarranted stigma attached to the womenfolk.[170] The Buddha made no distinction between a man or a woman for the attainment of spiritual ends. He delivered messages both for men and women alike and the moral code designed by him was applicable to both. The lower position of women in the spiritual world and culture was elevated as is revealed by the stories of several nuns achieving the highest goal, *nirvāṇa*.[171]

The order of nuns was open to married as well as unmarried women, irrespective of their status. There was no distinction between one or the other category of Bhikṣuṇīs. Even a courtesan like Āmbapālī was admitted

to the order of nuns. The education imparted to female novices and nuns was the same as that to the male monks. The nuns were provided with the knowledge of the deepest problems of philosophy, subtle mystical experiences and intense meditative exercises. In spite of this, as we have already seen, the position of nuns was considered lower that the monks. Even a Bhikṣuṇī of several years standing was required to bow before a Bhikṣu, admitted to the Order comparatively recently. This condition was objected to by Mahāprajāpati Gautamī, a queen and a mother but she had to yield to the teacher's will.[172]

The social change is apparent from the removal of distinction between male or female progeny. A rich Mahāsuvanna is said to have wished before a tree, "Should I be granted a son or a daughter, I will pay you great honour O' decked tree."[173] Again in Jātaka[174] Kāśirāja is shown praying for a son or a daughter. In *Saṁyuttanikāya,* Lord Buddha considers "a woman child even a better offspring than a male child.[175]

The overall picture of attitudes to women's entry into the Order, can be inferred through the words of Lord Buddha to Ānanda. Buddha explained that

> had woman not retired from household life to the houseless one under the doctrine and discipline announced by the Tathāgata, religion would have endured for long. A thousand years would the Good-Doctrine abide. But, since women had retired from household life, the religion would not endure long.[176]

The same idea can be found in the belief that "families that consist of many women and few men are easily overcome by burglars."[177] In the Buddhist literature, it appears that religion was mingled with political rights. This is the reason for a few queens like Mahāprajāpati Gautamī, Kṣema, Bhadda, and Kuṇḍalakesa embracing the Buddhist Order.

However, with regard to the political status of women, Lord Buddha's views remained positive and confirmed. He disliked the idea of women participating in politics. He also explained that women are easy victims to the senses, passion, anger, and greed. Further, Lord Buddha denounced the *strīrājyas* and the male subjects that admitted women sway.[178]

The truth of the matter is that Lord Buddha was not interested in temporal power. To him the domestic and governmental systems did not appeal much. This is perhaps the reason for their being little mention in the Buddhist period of conspicuous female members' administration or other spheres.

In the Jaina literatures of the two principal Jaina sects, the Śvetāmbara and Digambara, there appears a long list of leading women. Some of these may be legendary. Even so, they are depicted as mostly pious ladies inspiring the followers for higher pursuits. It shows that women were highly regarded in Jaina society. That is why it was prescribed that in emergencies like flood, fire or robbery, a woman must be rescued first.[179]

Like men, women too had the right to attain perfection or perfect liberation of the highest Order. However, practically, Jainism believed that there were very few women who had the strength of mind and body adequate to study the faith or endure the hard life of an ascetic. Men were considered more physically fit than women for undertaking a course of self-mortification and self-effacement. Thus in the Jaina spiritual order, women were provided a secondary position.

It is on the basis of detailed references, that some critics have concluded that in the Jaina ethic the status of women was almost the same as in the preceding Hindu ages. There was hardly any material advancement in her general social status.[180] For instance, Ṛṣabhadeva, the most venerable Tīrthaṅkara is said to have taught men seventy-two arts and women only sixty-four, making a marked distinction.[181]

Briefly then, in all important juristic acts, a Jaina woman is no more than the necessary co-actor with her husband. As a daughter also, a Jaina women enjoyed proprietary rights only in case "her father does not have any male issue."[182] Worse, a married daughter had no share in the property of her father, if she had brothers. The status of a widow was better in Jainism than in Hinduism. According to *Vardhamānanīti:*

> In case the lady was good, she could become the owner of all the property of her deceased husband; and whether there was a son or not, she would have full power like her husband.[183]

In conclusion we can accept Altekar's view, with some qualifications that

> Man wielded supreme power in the society almost everywhere and was not prepared to sanction a custom adverse to his own interest and comfort.[184]

The Role of the Queen

Since the king was the keystone of the political edifice special mention of the queen's position is necessary. Here we shall mainly deal with the political powers of the Kṣatriya women in the person of the queen. Not much matter

is available here. But some idea can be formed from the scattered references so far avalaible.

It is usually believed that marriage was seen as an institution for raising issue. This generalisation should not blind us to the fact that love also played an important part in a marriage. Specially during the heroic age love was as much a ruling passion of the heroes as war.[185] Therefore in cases where the wife happened to be of sufficient personality, intelligence and physical beauty she naturally had a great influence in public affairs and the course they took. In the age under consideration politics usually consisted of relations between princes. Alliances between states were often strengthened by marriages. In the Epic we see that the Pāṇḍavas in their early life were bitter enemies of the Pañcāla king and had inflicted severe humiliation on him just to please their preceptor, but the same Pāṇḍavas married his daughter and became his greatest ally.[186]

Often the abduction of queens and princesses formed the motive of international quarrel as exemplified in the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa.

When Draupadī was dragged forcibly to the gambling hall, her slender body bent, she then said in a low tone, "I am unwell, fool, my garment is (but) single, ignoble man, you must not take me to the hall."[187] Much indignation was shown by the heroes at this barbaric act and it later became one of the major issues in the Mahābhārata war.[188]

The women sometimes instigated quarrels. Forceful women like Draupadī stand out as striking examples. Her speech in the gambling scene reflects her spiritedness.[189] Spurted by it Bhīma vowed to destroy Duḥśāsaṇa.[190] In the *Rāmāyaṇa* Queen Kaikeyi plotted to send Rāma to the forest to secure the throne for her son.[191] Thus, though the women acted behind the scene they certainly exerted a powerful influence upon the political scene.

The Jātakas are full of stories about the corruption and immorality or the women in the king's harem. Even the chief queen did not think twice before committing a grave sexual offence. The royal household was frequently a den of vice, corruption and intrigue which not only disturbed the peace of mind of many kings directly affected but caused political turmoil, unrest and enmity between neighbouring kingdoms.[192] We get a glimpse of the lustful nature of the queen in a Jātaka.[193] Elaborating on the Jātaka concept orthodox Brahmanical writers[194] also paint the women in unfavourable colours. It was considered most undesirable to have a woman as ruler. Under such a government men would sink like stone boats.

Women were considered unable to enjoy independence,[195] that the Buddhist view is also not flattering can be gauged from the statement in the *Majjhimanikāya*.[196] "It is impossible it cannot come to pass that a woman should be a wheel-turning king. . . ." Thus in general the views of all the ancient Indian political thinkers are similar, i.e., it is most unfortunate to have women as rulers. According to A.S. Altekar,[197] Hindu law did not permit an only daughter to succeed her father as the ruling queen. The vast majority of the constitutional writers opposed the succession of women to the throne, because they felt that on account of their natural limitations, they could not become efficient administrators.

Some abstract statements in the Epic mention women rulers, but they avow that affairs must be in a sad state among such people.[198] In addition such lands are regarded as far off, and those living in a woman's kingdom are mentioned along with barbarians, the Yavanas and the Chinese.[199]

Within the framework of these constraints we find some laxity in the Indian polity. When the heir apparent was a minor at his succession, the administration was carried on by a council of regency and the dowager queens usually presided over this. This we find in the Epic where on the death of the king the kingdom is kept for the prince by an older relative, but the dowager queens' authority is respected.[200] Here the reference is to Bhīṣma, the older relative, and Satyavatī the dowager queen. Though Hindu Law did not permit only daughters to succeed their fathers as ruling queens, they sometimes were regarded as the regnant queens as suggested in the joint coinage of Candragupta I and his Licchavi queen Kumāradevī. Usually the son-in-law succeeded to the kingdom of a father-in-law and the heiress became merely a queen consort.[201]

The Udaya Jātaka contains interesting information that when Udayabhadda, king of Kāśī was dead and "Other king there was none, the commands of his wife were promulgated, and the courtiers administered the kingdom.[202] Thus here the widowed queen carried on the administration. The Jātaka also contains stories of the people electing a woman as ruler. In the Hatthipala Jātaka[203] we see, when the throne of Benares falls vacant, the people gather before the palace door and request his wife to undertake her royal husband's duties as he had become a hermit.

"It is the pleasure of our noble king to be a hermit leaving everything
So in the king's place now we pray thee stand;
Cherish the realm, protected by our hand."

In the Epic we find Bhīṣma advising Yudhiṣṭhira after the great war to install the brothers, sons or grandsons of the defeated kings on the thrones. He however, also urges King Dharma to sanction the coronation of the daughters of those that have no sons.[204] Women are supposed to be fond of pleasure and power and use these means to cast off their sorrows.[205]

In the *Rāmāyaṇa* grief-stricken King Daśaratha tells Queen Kaikeyī that he cannot live without Rāma, therefore she can have her wish and rule the kingdom as a widow.[206] The young and vivacious Queen Kaikeyī could scheme to send Rāma to the forest for fourteen years in spite of him being chosen by the king, elders and counsellors as the regent. We find the same queen saving the King's life in a war between gods and *asuras* where King Daśaratha fought for the gods. Her bravery is exemplified by the story when during the same battle, one of the spokes of the chariot broke, she put her arm in its stead and saved the situation.[207]

Similar active participation in a war by queen is seen in the early Vedic period as well when Viṣpāla lost her leg in a battle and obtained an iron leg through the grace of the Aśvins, thus proving that queens were not always passive.[208]

The *Mahāvaṁsa* tells the story of the wicked Anula who murdered her husband Tissa because she was in love with Śiva the palace-guard whom she poisoned in favour of Vaṭuka the city carpenter whom again she poisoned for a wood carrier. Each of her husbands ruled for short periods. Then, "when the princess Anula, who desired to take her pleasure even as she listed with thirty-two of the palace-guards, had put to death Niliya also with poison, the Queen Anula herself reigned four months."[209] Another reference of a woman "king" is Queen Sīvālī. After the death of Cūlābhaya, his younger sister, Sīvālī the daughter of Amaṇḍa, reigned for four months, when she was dethroned by Amaṇḍa's nephew.[210]

In keeping with the general attitude of the times the Buddhist view about woman rulers is not very flattering. It is well expressed in the Koṇḍanya Jātaka.

> To cause another's death is accounted infamy in this world, infamous too is the land which owns a woman's sway and rule; and infamous are the men who yield themselves to women's dominion.[211]

The reference to Queen Cleophis, ruler of Magadha, is made by Justin and Q. Curtius Rufus. She succeeded her son and surrendered in battle to Alexander the Great. By further acts of surrender she is supposed to have regained her kingdom, but came to be dubbed the "royal harlot."[212]

However, R.C. Majumdar has inferred from different opinions of Greek writers that the example of "the queen commander leading the struggle for freedom in person brought the entire womanhood of the locality into the fight, while their heroism also infected the mercenaries whose initial vacillation was replaced by a determination to prefer death to dishonour.[213]

In later Vedic literature, though women were mostly confined to the household the Mahiṣī (Chief Queen) is considered a "limb of the state" as she is one of the *ratnins*. She ranks among those who consecrate the king along with the Purohita, the Rājanya, the Sūta, the Grāmanī, and the Saṁgrahitṛ and together they sustain the kingship.[214] Jayaswal describes *ratnins* as high officials of the state.[215] We get references to *ratnins* in the Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas.[216] While discussing the Ratnahaviṁśi ceremony, U.N. Ghoshal[217] shows the importance of queens. He points out that out of the twelve *ratnins* enumerate in the various treatises, except for the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,* Mahiṣī, Vāvātā, and Parivṛktī form the three important members. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, however, gives due respect to the chief queen when it states: "And on the following day he goes to the dwelling of the Queen and prepares the pap for Aditi. Aditi is the Earth and she is the wife of the gods and that is the wife of that (king) hence it is for Aditi. And she the queen assuredly is one of his (the king's) jewels: it is for her that he is thereby consecrated, and he makes her his faithful wife. The sacrificial fee, on her part is a milch cow, for this (earth) is as it were a milch cow: she yields to men all their desires and the milch cow is a mother and this (earth) is as it were a mother: she bears (or sustains) men. Hence the fee is a milch cow."[218]

In the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa ratnins* are taken as givers and takers of the kingdom.[219] There are also instance of the *ratnins* becoming vigorous[220] and since the queen was an important *ratnin,* she must have played an energetic role; as the *ratnins* constituted the king's council the queens naturally exercised their powers here. On important occasions like forming the *sabhā* or assembly, deciding on the heir on the demise of a king, etc.[221]

Pāṇinī also feels the queen had an official position in the Hindu polity. She was crowned jointly with the king. He calls the Chief Queen Mahiṣī;[222] the special term *mahiṣa* probably refers to allowances in the civil list which was a fee fixed by convention (*dharmyam ācāra yuktam*). After the Chief Queen came the position of the mother of the princes known as Prajāvatī. Her salary was called *prajavata*. Kauṭilya also distinguishes

between the Chief Queen and the mother of princes as Rājamahiṣī and Kumāramātrī in the civil list, the former receiving 48,000 and the later 12,000 silver *paṇas* per year.[223] The chief queen (Ajja Mahesī) is frequently mentioned in the Jātakas apart from Pajāpati[224] (Skt.: Prajāvatī), a title applied to all other queens except the Chief Queen.

K.P. Jayaswal, however, bases the queen's official standing in the fact that she appeared with the king on certain official occasions. The underlying principle here is the sacred theory that without a wife no sacrament could be performed. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* says of the queen, 'For she inasmuch as she is his wife is half of himself. Therefore as long as he does not find a wife, so long he is not born, for so long he is not complete.'[225] In the *Mahāvaṁsa* we find King Vijaya refuses to be consecrated unless he has a wife also consecrated.[226] Marriage is here constantly associated with the King's consecration[227] showing at the least a respect granted to the queens. The *Agnipurāṇa* also insists that at the coronation ceremony performed at a proper time, the king should select his astrologer, the royal priest, his queen, who should be his wedded wife and his ministers. . . .[228] The Kuśa Jātaka also testifies to this customary necessity of a queen for kingship, "our king has a son; the bold prince Kuśa the king is anxious to make over his kingdom to him and has sent us to ask you to give him your daughter Pabhāvatī in marriage and to accept as a present this golden figure.[229]

Based on a similar principle as in the Vājapeya, she ascended the throne together with the husband,

> "Come wife, ascend we,
> the sky ' . . . ascend we!'
> Says the wife . . . she the
> wife in sooth is one-half
> of his own self; hence as
> long as he does not obtain
> her, so long he is not
> regenerated for so long he
> is incomplete."[230]

The Epics also prove the practice of joint coronation.[231] In spite of these references we cannot state categorically that the queen was a necessity beyond doubt for kingship.

During the Maurya period the queens appeared to have held a high status. The Maurya chief queen was designated Agga Mahiṣī.[232] It appears

that seniority was not an important criterion to become the chief queen.[233] The queens had their own residence at different regions.[234] Economically also they were well provided for as can be understood from the private funds they had for donations. An important Pillar Edict[235] of Aśoka corroborates this: "According to the words (or command of) (the king), the Beloved of the gods, the Mahāmātras (high state functionaries): 'whatever gift has been given here (in my empire) by the Second Queen, whether it be a mango orchard, or a garden (or a grove), or an alms-house or any thing else that is counted (as her gift), that is hers. All these are thus to be reckoned (or known) as being given by Karuvakī, the Second Queen, mother of Tivara'."

Coming to the second century BC, we find Queen Nayanikā at the helm of affairs of the Sātavāhanas. The *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*.[236] gives us details about her presiding as a regent. The Sātavāhanas are known as a matriarchal dynasty, hence the power of the queen must have held sway. Some matronymic kings were: Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi, Vaśiṣṭhiputra Pulumāvi, Vaśiṣṭhiputra Śiva Śātakarṇi, Gautamīputra Yajña Śātakara, Vaśiṣṭhiputra Sri Chanda Satī. . . .[237]

Thus we find that women adorned the throne as regents, or wielded power under distress.

The above discussion proves one point: that the Chief Queen was not a nonentity. She certainly deserved respect and was held apart from the other queens.[238]

We can conclude by saying that women rulers were usually looked upon with disfavour but that they could not be totally ignored. The queen's positions was stronger in the social and religious sphere more than in the political sphere. However, as we showed women with domineering personalities certainly influenced the political activities, whether from behind the scene, or boldly in tandem with the king.

The Harem and the Courtesans

The king and the princes were allowed a number of concubines though of course the princess wed by him according to solemn rites ranked as the legitimate wife. She lived in a special section of the harem and enjoyed the prerogatives accorded to queens. Though the women of the harem accepted the priority of the queen or the legitimate wife, they never tired of intriguing among themselves in the hope of achieving favour from the king.

The Jātakas paint a very lurid picture of the women's character. According to them the women of the king's harem were very often corrupt and immoral. Their standard of chastity was considered remarkably low.[239] The chief queens themselves were found guilty of grave sexual misconduct. We have the example of a king who set out to quell some border disturbances and at the request of his queen sent a messenger at the end of each league to enquire about her health. In all about sixty-four messengers visited her and with each of them she proved her easy virute. She tried to even entice the royal chaplain but failed. In his anger the king ordered the execution of all the sixty-four men but the royal chaplain offered this logic against such a fatal step: "The men are not to blame for they were constrained by the queen. Wherefore pardon them. And as for the queen she is not to blame, for the passions of women are insatiate and she does not but act according to her inborn nature. Wherefore pardon her also" The king was unable to refute this argument (121).

We have an interesting anecdote where the son of a royal priest had illicit relations with the queen of King Maddava. The king permitted him to enjoy seven days in her company. However, at the end of those seven days both the lovers absconded. The king consoled himself thus: "If she loved me, she would not forsake her kingdom and flee away. What have I to do with her when she has not love but fled away?"[240]

A similar story is found in the Pabbatupathara Jātaka[241] where the king was faced with a serious dilemma because his wife and minister were engaged in illicit relation. He lamented that he could not do without any of the two. Here too the *paṇḍita* advised the king that "out of the mighty river all creatures drink at will. If she is dear have patience, the river is river still."

We have another instance where the chief queen fell in love with her step-son.[242] Though on the face of it such an instance is revolting, if one studies it deeper, it could be because there was no age bar and often kings married girls much younger than themselves. Often young girls were presented to the king by his vassals and well-wishers. These young girls filled the harem but probably enjoyed the king's company only rarely, thus it is not unnatural that they carried on intrigues with other male members of the palace and court. However one should take these descriptions of corruption with a pinch of salt because in an age when Buddhism and Jainism extolled strict ascetism it was necessary to focus on the frailties of human beings especially in regared to sexual life.

As early as the Ṛgvedic times we have instances of slave girls being presented to *ṛṣis* by kings. King Trasadasyu presented fifty such brides to sage Sobhari Kāṇva. Along with cattle, bride or *vadhu* slaves were included. There are descriptions of chariots full of slave girls. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* four hundred such maids or *anucārīs* are spoken of. In the Upaniṣads we find the king being attended by five hundred women carrying perfumed powder, etc.[243]

Kauṭilya also does not spare the women of the harem. He warns against their lowly treacheries. According to his guidelines, when in the interior of the harem the king shall see the queen only when her personal purity is vouchsafed by an old maid servant. He shall not touch any women (unless he is apprised of her personal purity); for hidden in the queen's chamber, his own brother slew king Bharasena; hiding himself under the bed of his mother, the son killed king Kārūśa; mixing fried rice with poison as though with honey his own queen poisoned Kāśirāja; with an anklet painted with poison his own queen killed Vairantya; with a gem of hers bedauched with poison his own queen killed Souvīra; with a looking glass painted with poison his own queen killed Jālutha; and with a weapon hidden under her tuft of hair his own queen slew Viḍūratha.[244]

Hence the king had always to be careful to avoid such lurking dangers. He had to keep away his wives from the society of ascetics with shaven heads or braided hair; of buffoons and of outside prostitutes, *dāsī*. Nor shall women of high birth have occasion to see his wives, except appointed midwives. Kauṭilya prescribes that prostitutes (*rūpājivā*) with personal cleanliness effected by a fresh bath and with fresh garments and ornaments should attend the harem. Eighty men and fifty women under the guise of fathers and mothers and aged persons, and eunuchs should not only ascertain the purity and impurity in the life of the inmates of the harem, but also so regulate the affairs as to be conducive to the happiness of the king.[245]

A result of such wanton sex could be that the king developed into a debauch neglecting his conjugal duties and the government of his kingdom. Such amorous excesses were sure to lead him ineluctably down a path of physical exhaustion which usually leads to death.

The royal harem was usually situated in the interior section of the palace. No men except the king and the ancient guardian in-charge of the harem were allowed to visit the harem. Usually the person in-charge was selected from among the eunuchs. He was a colourful figure and often depicted in

later literature. The entire personnel including the small army that kept watch day and night over the ramparts consisted of women. These Amazon guardians are frequently represented in the paintings and sculptures of ancient times. They are described as "the flower of womanhood, women of the highest distinction."[246]

The major preoccupation of these princesses was probably their daily toilet. A number of female servants attended to the aesthetic devices. Each maid must have had her specific duties to attend to. From later literature we learn about the meticulous attention paid to the preparation of ointments and pastes for beauty treatment.[247] From such references we can probably conclude that such refinement must have been the result of refinements accumulated down the centuries of meticulous attention to such details. The *Mahābhārata*[248] informs us that serving women braided garlands, prepared the incense which would be set in each private room and also lit sticks of incense over which they fumigated the clothing which the princesses would wear holding each article for a long time over the fragrant smoke.

How modern the Kṣatriya women of those ancient days were can easily be gauged from the variety of bathing equipment that was assembled, e.g., razors and tweezers for removing body hair,[249] nail-cutters.[250] It appears special attention was paid to nail care by both the sexes. As is common in the twentieth century, then too the nails especially those of the left hand were allowed to grow long and were carefully manicured, polished, shining and kept spotlessly clean. A negative proof of this aspect of beauty care is available from the Buddhist monastic rules which forbade the cleaning of nails with the nails of other hand or with the teeth, to pare them by rubbing against a wall or to polish them. The same Buddhist source mentions ear-picks[251] and roots and pastes meant for dental care, and massaging instruments made from substances like ebony, terracotta or bone.[252] Archaeologists have unearthed little pots and containers which probably contained ointments, pastes, scented powder and perfumes,[253] glass and combs must have been indispensable accessories in such elaborate beauty routines.

From the detailed descriptions found in later literature about the massage before the bath and the toilet after we get an idea of similar processes probably followed in the earlier eras too. The maids kneaded and rubbed the body of the princesses with ointments and perfumed oils so as to make the skin supple and muscles firm.[254] Depending upon the season the

princesses either used the harem's bath-house or took a dip into the river or the park's pool or just stood under a waterfall. If no running water was available, perfumed water from vases or *kalaśa* were poured over the princess while she rubbed her body with soap and coiled her hair up and cleaned as well as massaged her gums with roots[255] and other pastes. There are references to special bathing pools or tanks. They were floored or faced with brick, stone or wood and had walls or steps of the same materials. To prevent water from becoming stale pipes were laid to drain it off. There were also hot bath-rooms with chimney and fire place and roof covered with skin. The bathers put scented clay over their faces and took their bath seated on stools. There were cells to be used as cooling rooms after the steam bath.[256] Obviously this kind of luxury could be afforded only by the nobles and the rich.

After the bath great care was taken in drying the hair and fashioning it.[257] A variety of pastes was rubbed over the body and the face and body painted with a small stick dipped into an oil of aloe wood.[258] Minute details regarding the collyrium (*añjana*) used to decorate the eyes are available. The different varieties were grouped under one head (*khol*).[259] It seems to have been used from very ancient times.[260] Some kind of lipstick also seems to have been in vogue. When the toilet was complete the princesses dressed according to the day, hour and occasion. An astonishing variety of jewellery adorned the princesses. The princesses enjoyed a leisurely meal and whiled away their time resting and teaching sweet nothings to pet birds. After the midday heat was over, they usually strolled in the garden and enjoyed drinks. They usually bathed in the park pool, at times joined by the king. Finally after the evening meal they gathered to either witness singing or dancing.

Thus we find that the princesses led a rather indolent, luxurious life. The monotony was broken when the king organised an outing or took them to the *samājas*. The Jātakas give a clear picture of the *samājas*.[261] Parents send messages to their sons to come and join them during this festive occasion. Kings invite people from all over to witness the fun and the frolic. A pavilion (*maṇḍapam*) was set up and a throne (*pallaṅka*) set apart for the king. The women of the harem, slaves, Brāhmaṇa courtiers and citizens sat around him. The women of the harem also probably enjoyed water sports in the company of the king and friends.[262]

The women vied with each other for the king's favour during his visits, which depended upon his humour and demands. References to prostitutes and dancing girls are contained in the *Ṛgveda*. Girls who did not have

brothers often were reduced to prostitution.[263] The terms *kumāriputra*[264] or the son of an unmarried woman and *agru,* the son of an unmarried girl[265] in a way confirm the practise of prostitution. It is recorded that such children were exposed and were attacked by animals. There is mention of the Uṣas who were likened to dancing girls wearing embroidered garments, or *adhipesāṁsi* and baring their bosom.[266]

It appears that the institution of free love or *samana* was encouraged during this era.[267] We hear of *goṣṭhīs* where cultured men met and discussed and relaxed by listening to music and enjoying the company of courtesans. As time passed the connotation of the word *sabhā* also changed. By the time of the later Saṁhitās, *sabhā* came to signify the drawing room of a private house.[268] The reference to Sabhāvatī Yoṣā of the *Ṛgveda* in this particular context illustrates women visiting a *sabhā* hall,[269] probably meaning a courtesan. Here the word *sabhā* is used in a pejorative sense because Sabhā was synonymous with gamblers' gatherings and in such gatherings it was natural to find courtesans.

There were prostitutes of all kinds, from the lowliest whore selling herself for a few coins to the refined ones flaunting a careful and brilliant education, with a thorough knowledge of the erotic arts as well as artistic and intellectual proficiency.

There were several ways of making an appointment with a prostitute. She could either be accosted in the street or visited in a brothel. She could be engaged to visit the client's home or vice versa.[270] Dressed in all their finery and heavily made up, exposed themselves to passersby for attracting customers in way that are standard practise in the profession. An interesting detail is that half of the price fixed went into the fund which paid for the hire of costumes and purchase of perfumes and garlands to be distributed to the customer. The customer had to return the costume when he left.[271]

The epics also testify to the popularity of the courtesans. They enticed men of virtue, accompanied armies and served the king by acquiring proper training in the arts and crafts.[272]

These courtesans or *veśyā* had made a niche for themselves in society. In fact they came to be regarded as important adjuncts to urban culture and prostitution was a flourishing business in the large towns and capital cities. How accepted they were in society can be gauged from Yudhiṣṭhira's observations:

> My dear friend, asked after the welfare of the fair-decked, fair-clad, scented, pleasing, happy, pleasure-fraught women of the houses of joy, *veśastrijaḥ* whose glance and

speech glide so easily and sweetly along.[273]

Even during a solemn visit like Kṛṣṇa's peace mission, Duryodhana arranged for rest-houses with women for him. In fact King Dhṛtarāṣṭra ordered that along with his sons fair harlots exquisitely clad should go to meet the mighty Keśava.[274] Thus it appears that to the Kṣatriya no stigma was attached to courting courtesans. Both the Pāṇḍava's and Duryodhana's army apparently included women who offered their bodies for sale.[275] Similar sentiments are expressed in the *Rāmāyaṇa* as well. We find King Daśaratha the father of Rāma, making sure that women who lived by their beauty also followed in the train of the army[276] that he equipped for his son Rāma. Thus it appears that at least among the Kṣatriyas debauchery was not a sin.

There are references to attempts by young temptresses to tempt innocent sages. Often kings were involved in such activities. The king of Aṅga, e.g., called a noted courtesan to tempt the sage Ṛṣyaśṛṅga. The courtesan and party proceeded in a well-decorated boat to Vibhāṇḍaka's hermitage.[277]

Amorous games played a great part in the life of the young Kṣatriya kings, rich merchants and bankers who had amassed wealth employed courtesans. There is a reference to a king who had sixteen thousand dancing girls or *naṭakitthiyo* in his retinue.[278] These courtesans were at the beck and call of the king. The kings passed long hours in shady gardens in their company and the drunk king rested his head in the waiting lap of his favourite dancing girl.[279] Like other pieces of property fathers often bequeathed these courtesans to their sons.[280] The historian Curtius vividly describes the relations between the king and the courtesans.

> That no form of shameless profligacy may be wanting, he is accompanied by a long train of courtesans carried in golden palanquins, and this troop holds a separate place in the procession from the queen's retinue, and is sumptuously appointed. His food is prepared by women who also serve him with wine which is much used by all the Indians. When the king falls into drunken sleep, his courtesans carry him away to his bed chamber invoking the gods of the night in their native hymn.[281]

Almost similar descriptions of courtesans are available in the *Arthaśāstra*.[282] According to it prostitutes or *dāsyaḥ* in the royal service performed the duties of bathroom attendants (*snāpaka*), shampooers, (*saṁvāhaka*), bedroom attendants (*āstaraka*), washer-women and florists. It is interesting to note that while presenting water scents, fragrant powders, clothes and garlands to the king the royal servants along with the courtesans,

first touched these things reverently with their eyes, arms and breasts before offering them to him.

It is both interesting and informative to note the origin of the institution of Gaṇikā. It is stated that when there was dispute in an oligarchy over the hand of a beautiful girl the elders in the oligarchy resolved it by declaring her to be a Gaṇikā or one who is accessible to all, *sabbesaṁvoharika*. The oligarchy probably even supported her financially to establish her profession.[283] This points to the fact that prostitution was certainly not held in disdain.

The Jātakas are replete with examples of such courtesans. The most famous among them was Āmrapālī or Āmbapālī. According to the Pāli version as a child she materialised magically in the garden of the king of Vesāli at the foot of a mango tree. Thus she came to be named after the mango (*āmba*). She grew up to be very beautiful. The gardener brought her to the city where many suitors vied for her hand. In such a situation as was usual among the *gaṇa* or people, she was given the status of Gaṇikā so that everyone could have access to her.[284] The *Mahāvagga*[285] corroborates the story when it states that "there was also the courtesan Āmbapālikā who was beautiful, pleasant, gifted with the highest beauty of complexion, well-versed in dancing, singing and lute-playing and visited by men who desired her. She asked for fifty *kahapaṇas* for one night. Through her, Vesāli flourished. In fact indirectly she was responsible for the institution of the Gaṇikā in Rājagṛha."[286]

Another source[287] informs us that the Licchavi King Mahānāma had a mango grove where suddenly a plantain tree came into existence and blossomed in course of time. Seeing the phenomenon soothsayers predicted that on the seventh day the flowers would produce a girl. When this came true she was handed over to the chief queen who looked after her. Since her origin was in a mango grove, she was named Āmrapālī. When she came the age of puberty, queen declared:

> Hear me you Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vesa, in my garden was born a girl, she was adopted and nurtured by me. Now I am in search of a suitable match from a good family for her.

There were so many suitors that it was difficult to select one so the Gaṇa gave her the status of Gaṇikā. Āmrapālī or Āmbapālī agreed to become one but placed before the Gaṇa five conditions, viz., allocation of a residence in the first division of the city. If she was entertaining one

client another was strictly prohibited. She would receive five hundred *kārṣāpaṇas* as fees. In case a search was ordered by the Gaṇa her house would-be searched only on the seventh day after the warrant had been issued. The entry and exit points of her residence were not to be watched.

The Gaṇa agreed to all these conditions thus showing the prestige attached to this class of woman.

King Bimbisāra "engaged in conversation on good topics with his ministers," asked them what sort of courtesans each of them had seen. Being informed of the exceeding beauty and charm and the accomplishment of Āmbapālī, Bimbisāra decided to visit her at Vesāli in spite of the hostility of the Licchavis.[288] His son by her Abhaya,[289] enjoyed a high position in court. Her importance was such that Gautama Buddha himself accepted the invitation to share his midday meal with her and refused the invitation of the Licchavis. Āmbapālī was offered hundred thousand pieces by the Licchavis to give up the meal but Āmbapālī replied, "My lords, were you to offer all Vaiśālī with its subject territory, I would not give up this meal." After the meal, Buddha again gave a religious discourse. Āmbapālī was enthralled by it and presented a park named after her.[290] Thus not only kings, but religious teachers of repute also did not hold them in odium.

As already noted, Āmbapālī was indirectly responsible for the institution of Gaṇikā in Rājagṛha. A Buddhist text informs us that a merchant, after having described the charms of Āmbapālī of Vaiśālī to King Bimbisāra, requested him to install such a courtesan in Rājagṛha and this was done. The courtesan Śālavatī thus became the elected Gaṇikā of Rājagṛha and she was ranked among the important citizens.

Sālavatī had also achieved a high degree of competence in the arts of dancing, singing and lute-playing. Her fees were a hundred *kārṣāpaṇas* a night. She had a son whom she had abandoned. However this son was raised by Abhaya, the son of Bimbisāra by Āmbapālī, and became the famous physician named Jīvaka Bumārabhṛtya. Sirimā was the daughter of Śālavatī and was famous for her beauty. Sirimā herself maintained an establishment of five hundred *gaṇikās* to entertain the friends of her lovers.[291] She was a devout Buddhist. She spent much time in the service of Buddhism.

The love of the courtesan Sāmā of Benares for a robber is immortalised in Kanavera Jātaka.[292] Sāmā was the king's favourite courtesan and was served by five hundred female slaves or *vannadasiyo*. She charged one thousand pieces a day.

She had a wealthy lover who was entirely devoted to her, but whom she did not love. On an impulse she decided to bribe the governor with one thousand pieces to secure a thief's freedom and substitute somebody else in his place. She persuaded her lover to go to the governor with the bribe for the release of her so-called brother. The governor took the hint and sent the robber in a closed carriage to Sāmā and executed the lover. The courtesan became hopelessly infatuated with the bandit but the bandit was justifiably suspicious of such a woman who could so easily dispose of other people's lives. The robber decided to rob of her jewellery, therefore, suggested a day in the garden. Sāmā prepared delicacies and adorning herself with ornaments accompanied him. He made a show of violent affection and bolted with the jewellery, while she lay unconscious. When she revived, she immediately forgave him and waited for his return. She discarded costly garments, scents and garlands, sent actors in search of him. The actors sang a song extolling Sāmā's yearnings but all was futile for the robber never returned. Sāmā reverted to the old court life.[293] However, there are other versions of this lurid story. One of them is that after luring Sāmā to a lonely spot the robber strangled her while another insists that she killed him.[294]

This edifying story was probably inserted in the Jātakas to show the hazards of associating with courtesans especially if they lived on the fringe of the law and associated with criminals.

Almost a similar story is repeated in another Jātaka[295] but here the courtesan Sulasā showed more wisdom and courage than Sāmā. Sulasā was also a renowned courtesan of Benares served by five hundred slave girls and charging one thousand pieces per night. The prosperity of a courtesan was probably judged by the number of slave girls she had and the fees she charged, and the above mentioned figures appear to be the zenith of prosperity.

Sulasā's robber lover also decided to steal her, so suggested offering sacrifice to the tree deity. He persuaded her to adorn himself with ornaments and climb the top of the hill where the tree was situated. Once on top he threatened to kill her if she did not part with the jewellery. Sulasā tried to plead with him by reminding him of all the good she had done for him but the robber refused to be moved. Then Sulasā, under pretext of a last embrace threw him down.

We find reference to another rich courtesan, Kālī, who refused to help her debauch brother Tuṇḍila who repeatedly lost money in gambling. She

was the Nagarasobhanī and took a fee of one thousand pieces a day.

Jaina literature[296] also affirms the high accomplishments of courtesans. Courtesan Campā is described as having a faultless body, *ahīna*; auspicious *lakṣaṇas* or signs; black painted *tilakas*; right height, girth, weight; educated in seventy-two traditional arts and sixty-four other qualities possessing youthful beauty; linguistic skills; and expertise in music and dance. Her fee was one thousand pieces a day. The king granted her the special favour of the use of an umbrella (*chatracarī*) and fan. She travelled in a covered wagon (*karṇiratha*). She herself patronised one thousand courtesans.[297]

All this testifies to the flourishing condition of the courtesans and the *gaṇikās*. There were many synonyms for these extraordinary women. R.L. Mehta[298] has culled the following: Vesi, Nāriyo, Gāmaṇiyo, Gaṇikā, Nagarsobhanī, Vainnadāsī, and Kumbhadāsī. A girl of pleasure for a short duration was called Muhuttika.[299] The professional musician was known as Gandhabbas and the fee of the prostitute was called *bhati* or *baribbayam*.[300]

This account of the courtesans cannot be complete without touching upon the elaborate arrangements recommended by Kauṭilya for this class of women. Among the sources of revenue advocated by him was an organisation of courtesans and prostitutes under the watchful eye of a superintendent. Rich or not, all the courtesans were subject to the control of the administrator charged specifically with their protection, with the supervision of the brothels and collection of a fixed percentage of the fees and gifts which the courtesans received from their clients.[301] It is worth remembering that these courtesans formed a class of their own, apart from the courtesans who were exclusively in the service of the king.[302]

Kauṭilya uses words like Gaṇikā, Pratigaṇikā, Rūpājivā, Veśiya, Dāsī, Devadāsī, Puṁścalī, Śilpakārikā, Kauśikastrī, and Rūpadāsi for courtesans and prostitutes. Probably Adāsi, Avaruddhā, Kṛtavarodhā, Duhitṛkā; and Kumārī are also used in the same sense.

The Gaṇikās were usually appointed from the profession, i.e., if a Gaṇikā had a daughter, a Gaṇikāduhitṛ Kumārī, she was also destined to join government service. They could also be selected by the Gaṇikādhyakṣa. It appears people offered their daughters to the superintendent of prostitutes because of the high income incumbent in the post. For example a Gaṇikā of the first rank received one thousand

paṇas per annum, the middle order ones received two thousand *paṇas* yearly and the highest rank holder received three thousand *paṇas*.

Since the Gaṇikās were a lucrative source of income for the state, there was strict vigilance of their activities. The Gaṇikādhyakṣa determined her earnings and checked extravagance. The fees charged by the Gaṇikā was called *bhoga* which later came to be known as *bhati*. The superintendent fixed the fees and directly received them. He even decided about the amount of gifts (*dāya*) the Gaṇikā could accept. After calculating the gross receipts (*āya)* and the gross expenditure (*vyaya*), the net income and profit were calculated. Since the courtesan's income belonged to the state and she only received a regular salary it becomes obvious that the superintendent was in full control of her financial side of the business. The fees and other receipts were deposited in the treasury, probably the ill-fated, ill-famed women kept the gifts for themselves.[303]

The Gaṇikās of the *Arthaśāstra* period certainly did not lead a free and easy life like the Gaṇikās of the Buddhist era. They could not even choose their clientele. As the receipts belonged to the state she had to entertain each and everyone who came to her. Inspite of being a prostitute there was no permission for private prostitution.[304] She could not become the mistress of any one man or Avaruddhā as this would prevent her from entertaining other clients. Later this law was altered, a man could take a Gaṇikā home only after paying one and one-fourth *paṇa* as well as the monthly wage that she received from the state as a compensation for withdrawing her from productive function for a stipulated period.

The children of a Gaṇikā were also not absolutely free. Their daughter usually succeeded as a Gaṇikā and the son became an actor or Kuśilava.[305] The daughter possessing beauty and proficiency in the art of seduction, became the Gaṇikā while the others with plainer looks were employed in the royal stores and kitchen or as ordinary maids, the sons started training from the age of eight. The state recruited the teachers to coach them as actors (*raṅgopajīvin*) and dancers (*tālavacāra*). Their salary was very meagre about one hundred and fifty pieces per annum.

It appears that inspite of the restriction, the Gaṇikā had full authority over their jewellery, the gifts and the salary. Jewellery was a sign of prestige and even the king could not confiscate it. However, scholars differ on the meaning of the term *svapateya*.[306]

Since the Gaṇikā held the status of a regular state employee there were certain privileges enjoyed by her. The state provided for her training in

various arts such as singing, instrumental music, recitation, dancing, acting, writing, painting, playing on the *vīṇā*, the pipe and the drum, thought-reading, manufacture of scents and garlands, and last but not least, shampooing. Fine clothes and jewellery were also arranged for her by the state. The state looked after the children of the Gaṇikā and ensured their education. The son of a Gaṇikā could withdraw from state service by paying the redemption money of twelve thousand *paṇas*. Similarly a Gaṇikā could regain freedom by paying the redemption money of twenty-four thousand *paṇas*. The state adopted a benevolent attitude towards aged and infirm prostitutes. They were given a regular old age pension. They were sometimes employed in state-owned factories. Emergency taxes were not levied on a Gaṇikā. From the foregoing we can infer that prostitution was a well regulated institution. They probably provided an incentive for people to visit the city with different motives: some to see them and enjoy their company, others to sell their merchandise. In a way they helped what today we would call the tourism industry. Probably modern Hong Kong and Bangkok with their stress upon prostitution as a business compare well with the meticulous way Kauṭilya advises their organisation.

A quick glance into the various grades of prostitutes will further enhance our idea about the position of women in that era.

A Pratigaṇikā was the substitute prostitute employed for a short period in the absence of the Gaṇikā. She received half the salary of the Gaṇikā[307] and could hope to become a Gaṇikā in future.

Rūpajīvā was probably not on the state rolls. She had her independent practice. They paid a monthly tax of two days earnings. During financial stringency she had to pay half her earnings to the state. Her status appears to have been slightly above the ordinary prostitutes, that is why probably their quarters were situated in the south of the fort and they were allowed access to the harem.

Kauṭilya uses the term *vesiya* to encompass all prostitutes not employed by the state. Their activities also were controlled by the fort authorities and they mingled with the artisans, spies and singers and kept a watch upon the conduct of the military personnel.[308]

Puṁścali was a very low grade prostitute who sold her body for money. The people in her company were considered suspects. Sometimes she was utilised as spy.[309]

Dāsī in the *Arthaśāstra* probably meant the slave-girls closely associated with the palace activities. She too was at times used as a spy.[310]

We find the Devadāsī or temple prostitutes even in that age. The fact that there were Devadāsīs in the third century BC and later is supported by the Jogimāra Cave inscription.[311] The inscription is translated by M. Boyer as "Sutanikā by name, Devadāsī. The excellent among young men loved her. Devadinna by name, skilled in sculpture." However, T. Bloc translates it as "Sutanikā by name a Devadāsī made this resting place for girls, Devadinna by name, skilled in painting." The institution of Devadāsī must have been flourishing, one we infer from the instance that Sutanikā was rich enough to build a rest-house for girls and actresses.

Śilpakārikā or artisan's wife and Kauśikastrī were demi-mondes. Kṛtavarodha and Avaruddhā were professional prostitutes who lived as mistresses under the protection of one master.[312]

The Gaṇikās were usually succeeded by their daughters or sisters, who inherited personal household effects. Inheritance was usually in the maternal line. If there was no one to inherit, the state confiscated the goods.

There were laws to protect the interests of both the Gaṇikās and the clients.[313] Fines were instituted for refusal to oblige after payment, for defamation, assault, abduction, forced confinement and disfigurement. One could not violate a Rūpajīvā or an immature daughter of a Gaṇikā. The killing of a Gaṇikā was heavily fined, but killing a client ensured capital punishment like being burnt at stake, or thrown into water and forcibly drowned.[314]

As in all ages in that era also the moral aspect of the profession was not overlooked. In spite of the common acceptance of this profession, courtesans, as today, were secretly appreciated but expressions like *nicakamma* (vile trade), a house of ill fame (*gaṇikāghara*), low women, (*duritthī kumbhadāsī*) were outwardly used. Nonetheless among the kings and nobles it was not a taboo to associate with the class.

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CHAPTER 6

Economy

ECONOMICS AND DAILY LIFE

THE EARLY INDIAN STATE was not a welfare state and a centralised political system had not yet attained maturity. Therefore we find private enterprise with a degree of autonomy prevalent. Mature and well-developed economic ideas of financial systems and institutions did exist in ancient India. The basic elements were:

(a) Land as the basis of production of wealth.
(b) Slavery as the chief supply of labour.
(c) State intervention and control in trade, commerce and the production and distribution of goods, as also monopoly over certain items of trade mostly luxury items.
(d) State expenditure on public works and participation of the state in welfare activities.

The tiller of the soil had three possible statuses—he might be either (1) a freeman holding (owning) a piece of land after payment of a fixed amount as rent, or in the form of cash or in kind including service, (2) he might be possessing only the right to use the land and having right only over the produce of the land, and (3) he might be a slave, who had to till the land with no right over the land or over the produce of the land.

Agriculture was the cornerstone of ancient Indian economy.[1] The importance of agriculture was recognised in the writings of early jurists like Baudhāyana.[2] It was one of the occupations assigned to the Vaiśya, who was required to be familiar with the manner of sowing the seeds and also the nature of the field,[3] but a Brāhmaṇa might also live by agriculture provided he did not personally participate in the cultivation of the soil.[4] In the *Rāmāyaṇa* we find that the Kṣatriyas ploughed the field, from the reference to a king of Mithila who while ploughing the field discovered

Sītā.[5] In Ancient India a great number of Śūdras settled as tax paying cultivators in the new settlements.[6] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* mention the different processes of agriculture like ploughing, reaping, etc.[7] Paddy, wheat and barley were the principal food grains. By the sixth century BC settled agricultural village economy had replaced the semi nomadic pastoral life of the early Aryans. The Śūdra helots were now used by daring pioneering individuals breaking away from the tribe to clear land. Member of the Viś or Vaiśyas became *gahapatis* or *gṛhapatis*, i.e., peasant proprietors and *kuṭumbikas*, the well to do peasants. Thus private property came into existence.

Migration into the middle Ganga valley was motivated not merely by search for new land but also probably by a demographic growth, which could not be supported. The movement eastwards may have been the result of a process of fission among the Kṣatyriya clans as described in Buddhist sources.[8] Kṣatriya lineages with their ruling clans claimed the ownership of cultivated land although it included categories of labour not related through kinship with the lineage. But was the Vedic king the owner of the land of his realm? There are no categorical statements regarding this in Vedic literature. We have to draw hypothetical conclusions from the political development of the age.

The *Atharvaveda* addresses the king thus: "Of lion aspect do thou devour all the clans Viś; of tiger aspect do thou beat down the foes; sole chief having Indra as companion, having conquered, seize thou on the enjoyments of them that play thee foe."[9] The Vedic evidence proves beyond doubt that the office of the king, the supreme commander in battle, grew out of warfare.[10] Beni Prasad also points out that "kingship originates in military necessity and derives its validity from consent."[11] The king thus became the keystone of the military and administrative arch. As his strength grew from power and conquest the concept of universal ruler developed; as sole ruler Ekarat and possessed of the whole earth (*sārvabhauma*) bordered by the ocean.[12] In might and majesty thus the king was second to none in his realm. As lord and protector of his realm and people, we can presume that with the passage of time and consolidation of his authority the king must have come to regard himself as the owner of all land in his dominion. The king is likened to the gods and even partially deified. King Purukutsa is described as an Ardhadeva[13] and Parīkṣit is styled as "a god among men."[14] In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* the king is represented as the manifestation of Prajāpati.[15] The gods own land, water and life and so do

the kings on the mortal plane. Indra is called the king of all the quarters,[16] indeed the Earth or *bhūmi* chose him as her lord[17] and if he is the lord of land, so is an earthly king referred to as human Indra.[18] Such a king with inexorable military might and secular authority naturally grew increasingly impatient of interference. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* we find that the king establishes himself among numerous people and subdues them even from a single dwelling and takes possession of whatever he likes. The people are likened to a female devoid of energy.[19] It is plainly stated "Courage leads to mastery over the peasantry."[20] This kind of overwhelming power naturally brings up the question of royal rights of ownership.

The Vaiśya is referred to as a tributary to another (*anyasya balikṛt*), to be lived on by another (*anyasy = adyaḥ*) and to be oppressed and ill-treated at will (*yathākāmajyeyaḥ*).[21] "Ill-treated at will" probably refers to Vaiśyas being evicted without cause from his land by the Kṣatriya. This expulsion has been analysed by Macdonell and Keith as "as act of royal authority, not an incident of tenure."[22] However, if the king could exercise royal power at will it certainly amounted to an overlordship of land, at least in theory. The very idea of political power must have grown out of a sense of overlordship or symbolic ownership. The overall ownership need not be incompatible with private ownership subject to payment of the king's dues. It was probably a kind of joint ownership where the king allowed his partners to dispose of the land as they pleased as long as they paid the king's share unimpaired. Thus in the early Vedic age land was considered a property of the community but this did not strip the individual occupier of all rights. Disposal of land was a social concern. By the end of the Vedic period, the distinction between private and crown properties presumably became clear. The *Atharvaveda*[23] refers to the king's share in a village. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* very explicity describes the relationship: "Whatever belongs to the people, in that, the chieftain has a share."[24] We come across the word *bhāga dugha,* "mulcher of the share"[25] who, among the king's *ratnins*, may have been a collector of taxes. Probably the phrase *grāma kama* points to the king's grant of his royal prerogatives over villages to his favourites so far as fiscal matters were concerned.[26] The cultivators in such land were probably reduced to tenancy. There is mention of the Kṣatriya's right to apportion land.[27]

However, the contradiction of the king not being master of all land, again becomes obvious when we find references refuting the ownership of the entire land by the king. That earth is common and does not belong

to the sovereign alone, is obvious when we find that the king cannot make a gift of the entire earth in the Viśvajit sacrifice which requires the king to give everything that belongs to him.[28] A similar sentiment is reflected when Viśvakarman Bhauvana intended giving the earth to his priest Kaśyapa after the sacrifice, but was reproved by Earth herself: "No mortal must give me away. . . ."[29] Fields carefully measured[30] points towards private individual ownership as early as the Ṛgvedic period. In the same text we again find a reference to the fields, comparing them to children.[31] The Saṁhitās mention the conquest of fields, which again points to private ownership. Fields and houses are mentioned as examples of wealth.[32]

Thus we find that ownership of land was still in the evolving stage. It was a gradation of ownership. The rights of the king were superimposed over those of the people, without undue hindrance to their right to till, to sow and reap their harvest, to inherit and partition their land. It is enlightening to note that in the Vedic age even the king was permitted to gift a piece of land only when the nearby residents agreed.[33]

It is probably traces of such communal ownership that we find in the ownership of waste lands, forests and mines of the state, along with state's claim to evict the tenants for non-payment of rent.

By the sixth century BC we have conclusive proof of ownership by private individuals. The Jātakas relate an interesting incident of a king of Takṣaśilā who was ensnared by the loveliness of a transformed ogress. She desired power and authority over the whole kingdom so that nobody might dare to annoy her with taunts. The king replied,

> Sweetheart, I have no power over those that dwell throughout my kingdom, I am not their lord and master. I have only jurisdiction over those who revolt or do iniquity. So I cannot give you power and authority over the whole kingdom.[34]

On the other hand, we have references of people freely gifting away, mortgaging or selling their lands. Āmbapālī and Anāthapiṇḍaka gave extensive plots of land to the Buddhist Saṁgha at Vaiśālī and Śrāvastī.[35] In the Jātakas a Brāhmaṇa of Magadha gives away a portion of his land to another.[36] Bhandarkar also mentions that about the period between 300 BC to AD 100 there is a very large number of gifts recorded as given by kings, princes and chiefs, by merchants, goldsmiths, artisans and ordinary householders.[37] Inscriptions recording numerous gifts of land made by private individuals without any hindrance from kings is also found.[38]

The *Arthaśāstra* also clearly distinguishes between crown lands and private lands.[39] Megasthenes however, presents a completely contrary view. According to him agriculture was confined only to a particular class which being Vaiśyas were mild and gentle in nature and were exempted from military service. They cultivated the land without any fear of political cataclysms. The entire land belonged to the state or king and they till it "for a rental in addition to paying a fourth part of the produce."[40] Arrian says that Megasthenes saw only a little of India and came to his conclusion. Hopkins is inclined to think that the difference between a quarter and a sixth as a regular grain (income) tax indicates a difference of time rather than of locality and that the Epic coinciding with the law represents in this point an ideal or older state of affairs than that found by the Greek.[41] Besides, Greek writers may have generalised just from their knowledge of crown lands. Thus, we can assume that from 600 BC private ownership of land was an important economic factor.

State Resources and Expenditure

In the earliest times the king met his expenses primarily through income from royal holdings, and from bounty and donations made by religious motives. The term *bali,* originally used to denote voluntary offerings made to gods for securing their favour,[42] came to be applied later to the presents and taxes offered to the king more or less voluntarily. From the Vedic Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas we learn that the subjects paid their contribution called *bali* to the king. From whatever pointers we can gather, it appears that the contributions consisted of a share of the agricultural produce as well as the domestic animals belonging to the cultivators. The gods were asked to compel the subjects to make contributions (*bali*) to ensure stability.[43] These prayers and scattered references in the *Ṛgveda*[44] suggest that the people were not in the habit of paying taxes as a matter of normal liability.

A primary source of revenue in the Vedic[45] period and in the Brāmaṇical[46] period, *bali* assumed the character of a tax. *Bali* had been stated by Kauṭilya[47] as a tax levied on the countryside and was different from land revenue yields from royal domains, toll charges, octroi charges, *kararajju, chorarajju, pārśva senābhakta. Bali* was not collected by the Gopa or Sthānika but by the commissioner (*pradestāraḥ*). Thus *bali* was probably an important tax.

The term *balipīḍita* oppressed by (*bali*) is significant. In the case of

the one-sixth part, no such reference is available. So *bali* was probably an additional impost. In the Rummindei Pillar inscription of Aśoka[48] the village of Lumbinī was made free of *bali* and paid only an eighth share of the produce. The term *ubālika* meant freed from *bali,* obviously meaning an additional impost. In the *Milindapānho,*[49] *bali* is mentioned as an emergency tax from which four chief ministers were free.

There was a change in the situation in course of time when warfare became more elaborate, the king had a particular territory to defend. The king settled down in a fortified town with a standing army and a court of refined courtiers to support him. Knights were heavy consumers of wealth but had to be supported. The king came to be regarded as the keeper of wealth.[50] The common people supplied the wealth and then came to beg of the king in need. In the coronation ritual also the king was described as the "eater of subjects."[51] The Brāhmaṇas were engaged in the profession of priesthood which did not yield any wealth useful to society as a whole. The Kṣatriyas spent their time conquering and annexing new territories. The Śūdras were any way debarred from holding property. Thus the whole burden of taxation was borne by the third caste engaged in productive and lucrative activities like agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade. Hence the Vaiśyas came to be regarded as the payer of tributes and taxes.[52] The concept of Viś or Vaiśya as the food of the Kṣatriyas is often repeated in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.*[53] The same idea is stressed relating a ritual:

> When, on the other hand he pours (the butter) together and thus offers it with the *juhū* thereby the people pay tribute to the Kṣatriya. Hence by what he takes in the *upabhṛt,* the Vaiśya under the rule of the Kṣatriya, becomes possessed of cattle, and when he pours the (butter) together and offers it with the *juhū*, thereby the Kṣatriya, whenever he likes says, 'Hello Vaiśya, just bring to me what thou hast stored away.'.[54]

Here we become familiar with the concept of forced offering of possessions. We find the Kṣatriya in a position to demand tributes from the Vaiśyas.

Two things men desire—security and wealth. The people caste has the latter and wants the former; the military caste wants the latter and can provide the former. Let us trade then says the Hindu on the following basis: The taxes were to be low when no danger was imminent, but when war was expected, naturally the price of security went up hence the levies on the Vaiśyas' wealth increased. The duty of the king included maintaining a standing army, making the necessary sacrifices to keep the gods happy.

For this also the people had to pay. The king's part of the bargain demanded that the king should keep guard over the country and defend the agricultural and mercantile classes not only from enemies without but even from foes within, making good the losses by theft in time of peace and in time of war by protecting them from harm. If the king failed to keep his part of the bargain after having exacted taxes his retribution was, being held responsible in the next world for the sins of the people.[55] In short it reiterates the basis of taxation and relations between the second and third classes in society.

> In practical life the king must not be too kind, he must not cut off his own root, he must tax as he finds necessary.[56]

The king is also advised to be merciful towards his people. "A realm is like a cow it must not be over milked."[57]

The three most important items of taxation known from our sources are land-revenue, tax on artisans and tax on traders.

In the Vedic age land was classified as (a) barren (*khila*),[58] (b) waste, (*dhanva*),[59] (c) forest (*araṇya*),[60] and (d) cultivable land (*urvara*).[61] The fields were definitely marked out.[62]Even in the Vedic age land was measured, and life was sufficiently organised to ensure that land was measured with measuring rods.[63] The *Āpastamba* frequently refers to the boundaries of the village.[64] Kauṭilya also speaks of minute and detailed survey of all types of land.[65] Some negative clues are there in addition, from which we may infer that there was land survey: we find that penalties of two and a quarter *paṇas* were prescribed for the violation and destruction of boundary.[66] Further, the very idea of land dispute presupposes the demarcation of boundaries. Re-survey[67] of land was also done when flood washed out boundary marks. The *Atharvaveda*[68] mentions two units of land measurement—(a) *abhisu* —a short measure literally meaning "rein" and (b) *vyama*—space between the tips of fingers when the hands are stretched out.

According to the Dharmasūtras the land revenue or *bhaga* was assessed directly on the holdings of individuals. It was generally fixed at a rate of one-sixth, or between one-sixth and one-tenth.[69] The *Mahābhārata* also enjoins the king to levy the proper tax in taking which he "does no wrong" if it is in the proportion of one-sixth of the annual gain obtained by the party taxed, with special rules for special cases.[70] The *bhaga* consisted of principally a share of the agricultural produce assessed either by appraisement of the standing crops, or by measurement of the fields.

The *bhaga* was sometimes supplemented by the levy of irregular cesses, additional burdens being in the form of forced labour which was utilised either for civil or military administration.[71] In the Dharmasūtras the agricultural as well as non-agricultural receipts from the cultivators are assessed for the king's revenue. Other important references to the king's dues from the cultivators are one-sixth of the trees, meat, honey, clarified butter, perfumes, medicinal plants, salt and other alkalies, rivers, roots, fruits, leaves, hides, articles manufactured from bamboo slips, earthenware, and stoneware.[72]

The Dharmasūtras are however silent about the methods of assessment of the land revenue. Nonetheless we can gather some information from other more or less contemporary sources. The Jātakas introduce us to a *rājjuggahaka amāccha* (an officer holding the ropes for measurement), or more vague, the *rājākammakaras* (the king's men) who visited villages for the measurement of fields. We have an interesting story of the measurement of a field by a model *rājjuggahaka amāccha* who used a primitive method of tying a cord to a stick of which one end he gave to the *khettasāmi* or the owner of the field, and the other he took himself. He faced a dilemma when, while measuring, he came to a crab's hole and reflected that if he put it on the other side the king's wealth would diminish, whereas if he puts it on this side the *khetta* would lose. In the end he put the stick in the hole thus killing the crab.[73]

We find a reference to an instance when an appeal was made for the exemption of a family from the land-revenue (*bali*) immediately after the official measurement of fields.[74] The tax collectors were called Balisādhakas or Balipatigahakas in the Jātakas.[75] The land revenue just as for *bhāga,* was probably assessed either by the method of appraising the standing crops, or by the measurement of the fields. From certain references specially in Sūtra literature we may conclude that land-revenue consisting of a part of agricultural produce was fixed at a standard rate or at different rates on a sliding scale based probably on different classes of soil. Gautama fixes the rates at one-sixth, one-eighth or one-tenth. Vasiṣṭha gives a fixed rate of one twelfth.[76]

Kauṭilya's list of sources of the king's income[77] includes the king's share of the agricultural produce, *bhāga,* and the net output of the state farms (*sitā*) and minor receipts from agriculturists. The very word *bhaga* suggests that payment of land-revenue was made in kind but the cultivator had the choice of paying the land-revenue either in kind or money.[78] The king was

directed to enrich his treasury with full grown corn.[79]

The area of fields was measured and the soil was classified according to fertility and all details like area, grade, nature of the produce and ownership were recorded in the register of the government. The villages were grouped under three categories—first class, middle class and lowest class (*jyeṣṭha, madhyama* and *kaniṣṭha*)[80] and the officer-in-charge of the village, Gopa recorded in his register the land under different categories like cultivated, uncultivated, plain, wet, garden, vegetable growing, and irrigated, etc.

Before the assessment of land-revenue a careful gradation of land was made, a detailed survey and measurement taken, calculation of outturn made and the expenses of cultivation per unit of land computed. Stringent rules were framed regarding leaving a producer's surplus. The share of the king was determined after considering the fertility of the soil, the need of the state and producer's surplus. The king's share of the produce of land (*bhāga*) was the regular, customary and legitimate share on the agricultural produce of revenue paying land. The rate of one-sixth or 16.66 per cent may appear fairly high compared to the modern rate of 7 per cent to 10 per cent. But the old average was levied not on the gross produce of the land as is now made but on the profits made. In the *Mahābhārata*[81] it has been urged that taxes should be fixed not on the gross income but after examination of income and expenditure. In other words on the net profits. One-sixth was the average rate. Kauṭilya[82] recommends that uplands (*sthāla*) and lowlands (*kedāra*) were to be entered separately in the register of the Gopas with a threefold gradation of villages. This together with the remark

> The king who finds himself in a great financial trouble and needs money may collect revenue by demand: In such parts of his country as depend solely upon rain for water and are rich in grain he may demand of his subjects one-third or one-fourth of their grain according to their capacity. He shall never demand of such of his subjects as live in tracts of middle or low quality . . .[83]

indicates that different rates for different classes of land were prescribed and intended.

The lands of the *janapada*, which may now be translated as district, fell into two distinct categories: those paying *rāṣṭra* taxes and the *sitā* lands settled as well as farmed directly under crown supervision.[84] The former category had probably developed out of the original Aryan tribal settlement. These lands probably had their own small headquarters city to which the

surrounding farmlands supplied the neceassary produce. As long as the administration of lands did not interfere with the sovereignty and power of the emperor it was allowed to continue along traditional lines. These were probably the free cities reported by the Greeks. Some of them even issued their own coins with a mint mark of the central treasury.[85] The taxes of these lands were also based on tradition, except that the special ministers of the king collected them. Some villages paid a single commutation tax, while individual shares were settled by residents among themselves. The main assessment was the sixth portion of the harvest. Certain taxes had evolved from older taxes like a tax "for army rations," the *bali* of traditional gifts to the king at the tribal *yajña*, some taxes from presents to the chief at the birth of a son, the convocation of a general assembly, etc. The new state regularly collected the older taxes.[86] Taxes on orchards, a nominal tax as compensation for supposed damage to crops by herds, and a cess for waterworks constructed by the state were levied.

Since *sitā* lands were crown lands the situation there was entirely different. The king encouraged re-settlement of wastelands.They were resettled either by immigrants from outside the *janapada*, Śūdra families deported forcibly from the king's own domains, or by people from overcrowded towns and villages. Either incentives were offered or compulsions forced them into relocation. However, the most interesting fact is that these villagers were not slaves and were not even serfs. They were totally free settlers, their freedom being curtailed only to that extent of possible fiscal losses. The settlement units were villages of between hundred and five hundred Śūdra peasant (*karṣaka*) families each, so grouped that the units could protect each other. For every ten, two hundred, four hundred and eight hundred villages, administrative headquarters probably with garrisons were built. Śiśupālagarh was probably a town of this kind, though not much evidence is available corroborating this except that the archaeological date is third century BC. These *sitā* lands paid a fourth or more of the produce into the state's warehouse.[87]

The land in each crown village was assigned only for the lifetime of a holder. However, if he were the first to clear it and cultivation was done properly it would not be reassigned. The holding could not be transferred without special permission. Failure to cultivate might result in re-assignment. Timber, forest products, fish, game and elephants of these lands were solely reserved for the state. The *sitā* lands were often allotted to officials, veterinaries and doctors for the duration of their service, without

any ownership or even mortgaging rights. Cultivated lands were to be continuously cultivated if by nobody else then by the minister of the crown land with the help of hired or penal labourers. There is mention of a half share system of cultivation for unfarmed land. These were generally assigned to those who had nothing but bodily labour to offer. The state provided tools, oxen and seeds.[88] That favours were shown to the Kṣatriya class is obvious when we find that inspite of the stringent discipline of *sitā* lands concessions were granted to soldiers and ex-soldiers even if they could not take up land on a fifth share basis.[89]

Kauṭilya also gives details about how fields and gardens of different categories in the village were measured and recorded by the Gopa who was probably an official in-charge of five or ten villages. Spies were recruited to inquire into the area (*mana*) as well as into the gross product. They were recruited by the Samaharta.[90] The same source also notes the distinction between those who pay revenue and those who are revenue free. The lists had to be maintained by the Gopa and here also the Samaharta was expected to send spies to make inquests into the holdings under the heads of income (*bhoga*) and revenue remissions (*parihara*). The tax-payers and tax free persons could sell or mortgage their property only to their respective *vargas* or classes and the tax-payers were forbidden to enter tax free villages.[91]

Water cess (*udakabhagam*) was realised from the cultivators using water for cultivation. Those who irrigated their fields by drawing water manually (*hastapravartimam*), were to pay one-fifth of the produce as irrigation cess. Those who irrigated the field with water lifted by bullocks (*skandhapravartimam*), were to pay one-fourth, and those using mechanical contrivances were to pay one-third of their produce as irrigation cess. If the water was raised from rivers, tanks, lakes, wells, *nadī, saras, taḍāga, kūpadghaṭam,* the cess was one-fourth of the produce.[92] Cess was levied even if the source of water was natural, not taken from any water project of the state. This was so because the state had also to look after the natural sources of water. The water cess in respect of waterworks built by the state was collected by the superintendent of the storehouse.[93]

> They pay a land tribute to the king because all India is the property of the crown, and no private person is permitted to own land. Besides the land tribute they pay into the royal treasury a fourth part of the produce of the soil.[94]

The correct position was that one-fourth share was paid in addition to

the land rent and this on an average is pertained to the water cess.

Besides the taxes levied on agriculture, taxes levied upon industry and trade are mentioned for the first time in the pre-Mauryan period. The Dharmasūtras mention that the tax imposed upon the artisans were in a basic form of fixed service for the king per month, or a monthly tax in lieu. This means that there had to be an administrative machinery for registering the artisans and collecting the dues. Certain are: artisans and those who lived by manual labour, as well as makers of boats and wheeled conveyances had to perform one day's work every month for the king.[95] Vāsiṣṭha says artisans had to pay a monthly tax to the kings.[96] The *Viṣṇu Dharmasūtra* echoes the same rule as the *Gautama Dharmasūtra* both of which declare that artisans and those who lived by manual labour had to perform one day's work every month for the king.[97] In contrast however, Kauṭilya includes the item Kāruśilpi-gaṇa or guild of artisans and craftsmen. The guild system itself is a very important economic development of the period under study. It dates from about the sixth and fifth centuries BC.

Fick observes that there was a clear difference of the organisation between the traders and merchants on the one hand and artisans on the other.[98] Hereditary families pursuing certain branches of trade formed themselves into a corporation with a *jetthaka* (alderman) as their head. In the case of the artisan, of course, heredity of profession was easier to discern. The adoption of any occupation other than his hereditary one has never been mentioned in the Jātakas.[99] Besides, the concentration of their industry in a particualr street and quarter of the village[100] helped in their getting together. The artisans also gathered under the headship of a *jetthaka* which again points to the formation of guilds among them. These guilds may originally have been confined to economic objectives but by the early Mauryan period they had acquired broader social functions.

The Jātaka also furnishes information about other minor details about the organisation of guilds, like mobility, or more than one organisation of the same class of craftsmen in the same locality. Our conclusions are drawn from information found in the Samuddavānija Jātaka.[101] Near Vārāṇasī was a great town of carpenters containing about a thousand families. Since there were two master workmen, the families were divided equally into two groups of five hundred each under the leadership of the two master workmen. On one occassion both the guilds left town and settled on an island, thus proving their mobility. We have reference in another Jātaka

about one alderman heading a group of a thousand families.[102] Therefore, the division of craftsmen mentioned above was not due to large numbers but because there was scope for more than one organisation of the same class.

Since the artisan usually followed his hereditary occupation, from father to son, the office of alderman was also sometimes hereditary. We have the instance of the son of a master mariner taking charge of the mariners when his father died.[103] In one of the Jātakas,[104] we find the alderman gaining the special favours of the king, becoming rich and important, which shows that slowly they were making a place for themselves in the state machinery. There were often rivalries betweeen these aldermen.[105] We have interesting information abut how the great Buddha reconciled them[106] probably by showing the important position they held in society. We find the appointment of a state officer, the *bhaṇḍagārika* (treasurer or superintendent of stores) whose office included the judgeship of all the merchant guilds.[107]

Traditionally, the number of guilds is supposed to have been eighteen[108] but one can probably compile thirty from all the available sources. The most well-known of these were of the cloth weavers and silk weavers, dyers, carpenters, potters, manufacturers of gear for raising and distributing water, pressers and sellers of oil, millers, gardeners and garland makers, betel quid sellers and carvers in ivory. The guilds included artisans working alone as well as workmen forming part of a factory enterprise in which the entire project was executed in a chain, each workman making only a particular part of an object. The trades, as already stated were nearly always hereditary and followed by the entire family. This socialisation was enhanced by the practice of the families grouping themselves in whole villages or in one particular area. This gave its own colour to ancient India's social orgainzation. On the outskirts of the woods, e.g., would be found villages composed entirely of foresters[109] or hunters or fowlers. Large towns were surrounded by clusters of villages whose inhabitants might be blacksmiths, carpenters, weavers, dyers, potters, and ivory-carvers.

The guild masters were also known as the elders (Jyeṣṭhaka), or the Best Śreṣṭhin, or even the most important, Mahattama. He too was entitled to a special seal which bracketed his name with the title of "Śreṣṭhin."[110] The main function of the guild master was to apply the guild rules and see that privileges were not encroached upon. He probably maintained contacts with other guild heads with a view to pricing. In many instances he was

probably selected as the banker of the communal funds of the local branches of his guild. The entire guild was liable to punishment by the royal court of justice in the case of breach of trust by a single group.[111]

We find the guild masters often acting as magistrates besides being administrators, representing a further stage in the development of the guild organisation. Corporations of traders and artisans were now recognised by the constitution as important parts of the state and acquired the significant power of making laws for themselves: "Cultivators, traders, herdsman, money-lenders and artisans" were authorised to lay down rules for their respective classes and the king would give legal decisions only after "having learned the (state of) affairs from those who (in each class) had authority to speak."[112] The guild master along with his guild was involved in social matters as well. This is best illustrated by the disciplinary rules laid down in the *Vinayapiṭaka*. According to one rule the guild was entitled to arbitrate on certain occasions between its members and their wives.[113] In another instance the authorization of the guild head was necessary for a wife desiring to leave her husband in order to become a nun.[114] An instance reported by Dr. Majumdar where a woman thief (*corī*), should not be ordained a nun without the sanction of the authorities concerned points to the executive and judicial authority that the guild had acquired by the Sūtra period. A quotation runs thus:

> where the king rules, his consent will have to be obtained; where the guild rules its consent will have to be obtained.[115]

Thus we find that the guild head was indeed an important member in political, social and economic spheres. Obviously managing all these responsibilities would have been impossible for one man therefore he must have been assisted by executive agents and a sercretary. In theory the guild head owed his position entirely and solely on his professional capacities and of having mastered his art to perfection. Thus on the local level a blacksmith capable of making a perfect needle which was straight, fine, sharp, well rounded and carefully polished with emery would be judged to have passed as a master and may be sure of being selected as, the next guild head of blacksmiths.[116] The Jātakas further give data such as that the members of each guild learned professional secrets which served as passwords to recognise each other.[117] We also learn that the merchants' guild developed into a moneyed bourgeoisie and their financial strength was drawn from many quarters. For instance, members often sponsored

caravans and maintained fruitful commercial relations with their counterparts across the border region, and acquired large profits on luxury products and goods of basic necessities by trading them throughout the country.[118] These profits were often utilised by the guilds to acquire whole villages and cultivated lands with an entitlement to a proportion of their income.[119] The guilds also acquired herds and flocks together with their herdsmen, shepherds and their profits.[120] The influence of Buddhism led to altruistic attitudes like devoting one's fortune to pious foundations and opening alms-houses. Thus we find donors supervising in person the daily distribution of aid and standing at the gate, while pathetic, miserable creatures throng in quest of food, clothing and assistance.[121]

Craftsmen also must have acquired wealth by rising above their humble origin. We have the story of a village potter who having a head for business, acquired five hundred workshops working solely for him, and a river fleet to transport his goods in the Ganges valley.[122]

The epics too mention these corporations or *śreṇīs*. Here they are described more as representative assemblies that acted as constitutional checks upon the king. The guilds mentioned here may have been the warrior guilds mainly, but other guilds, perhaps were also included. The importance of such guilds becomes obvious when the king is advised to produce dissensions among the leaders of *śreṇīs* who otherwise may act as embarrassing checks on his power.[123] Another passage declares that the *śreṇīs* are as powerful as the army[124] and the king should utilize the services of spies to get the leaders of such organised classes on his side.[125] Dr. Majumdar quotes certain verses of the *Mahābhārata* which enjoin upon a king to avail himself of the Śreṇīvala said to be equal in importance to hired soldiers (*bhṛtam*).[126] The *Rāmāyaṇa* also probably refers to the military aspect of the guild when it mentions the Sayodha *śreṇī*.[127]

We gather the maximum information about the guilds from Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* for the period under review. The *Arthaśāstra* contains minute details about the working and the privileges of the guild but we shall only touch upon the main points to this economic feature.

A complete account of the guilds was kept by the Superintendent of Accounts; whose main function was to enter in prescribed registers, the history of the customs, profession, and transactions of the corporation.[128] Three special commissioners who enjoyed the confidence of the guilds were appointed to receive the deposits of the guilds which they could ask back during distress.[129] Kauṭilya, in a plan of the ideal city, reserved special

areas for the residence of the guilds and corporations of workmen.[130] Since Kauṭilya includes the Karuśilpī-gaṇa or guilds of artisans and craftsmen in his list of sources of revenue[131] we can judge the importance of the guilds in those days. Obviously the tax was levied collectively on the guilds, and the distribution of the burden among the members must have been left to the guild-master and governing body. We have enlightening information about superior and inferior artisans being taxed differently due to the benevolence of the king even during financial emergencies.[132] The Mahākarus or big artisans were liable to a *kara* or tax of twenty per cent and the Kṣudrakarus or smaller artisans to a *kara* of ten per cent during an emergency.[133] Thus we see that collective assessment of guilds in normal times, and a double levy in emergencies, was a novel feature of the taxation of artisans, according to the *Arthaśāstra*. The *Arthaśāstra* has certain prerogatives for the guilds,such as concessions in law-suits between trade guilds[134] as well as to merchants belonging to the guilds.[135] The interests of the village guilds were protected by the regulation that no other guild could find access to the village except the local "cooperative guilds."[136] More privileges can be seen in Kauṭilya's account of the guilds of labourers or day workers.[137] These labourers were given an extra seven nights over and above the stipulated period for fulfilling their assignment. The entire earnings of the guild was to be distributed equally among the members, unless there were earlier rules of other kinds.Any member who neglected his work was to be excused for the first time but if he continued with his laxness he was to be expelled from the guild. Besides privileges there were rules saying a member was to be fined if he decided to leave the guild after work had commenced, or, if a member was guilty of a glaring dereliction of duty he was to be treated as a condemned criminal.These privileges and rules may have been common to all other guilds as well.

That the guilds possessed some kind of military character is obvious from scattered references in Kauṭilya's work. He includes the "Śreṇī-vala" among the various classes of troops which the king might possess.[138] There is controversy about the origin of the Śreṇīvala. Bhandarkar considers them to be soldiers maintained by the guilds. R. Shamasastry calls them a corporation of soldiers theraby ignoring the guild concept entirely. However, Dr. Majumdar feels they were the Kṣatriya-śreṇī or a class of guilds wich followed some industrial art and also carried on the military profession.[139] Whatever may be the explanation it does seem certain that the guilds did possess military resources of no mean worth. Kauṭilya

feels that the Śreṇīvala was sometimes sufficient both for defensive and offensive purposes, and if the enemy's army consisted mainly of this group the king should also enlist them in his army.[140] Kauṭilya in his Machiavellian way suggests that to curb the Śreṇīvala from acquiring power it should be given land constantly plagued by the enemy. This would keep them busy and draw their attention away from state affairs.[141] The military aspect is seen even in the pay allowed to a *śreṇīmukhya* (chief of the guild).[142] It equalled what the chiefs of elephants, horses and chariots got. This allotment is followed by the statement, "The amount would suffice for having a good following in their own communities."[143]

There is specific mention of Kṣatriya guilds that probably lived by both trade and war.[144] These guilds probably thrived only in the Kamboja and Saurashtra countries. The Mandasor inscription[145] which belongs to a later period refers to some members of the silk weavers' guild who took up arms and these martial spirits, valorous in battle "even today . . . effect by force the destruction of their enemies." The silk weavers' guild belonged to the Latā province which is on the border of the Saurashtra country which, as we have seen earlier, was the home of the Kṣatriya guild mentioned by Kauṭilya.

That the guilds were wealthy is obvious where Kauṭilya advocates nefarious means for acquiring this wealth by kings during distress,

> (The king) may employ a spy who would borrow from corporations bar gold or coined gold and then allow himself to be robbed of it the same night.[146]

Considering the monetary and military powers that the guilds possessed along with mass support they naturally became influential and powerful and to be taken note of. This is the factor underlying the discussion whether waste lands should be colonised by a people with, or without, organised bodies like guilds. The latter are preferred because Kauṭilya rightly points out that guilds and other organised bodies are of calamities and susceptible to anger and other passions.[147] While discussing whether trouble caused by a guild or that caused by its leaders is more serious Kauṭilya again says it is the latter because a leader backed by support causes oppression, injuring the life and property of others.[148]

During the Vedic period trade and commerce were well developed. The merchant Bṛhu "set himself over the highest head of the merchants whose god bounty led him to give a thousand liberal gifts to *ṛṣis*."[149] Another Vedic trader Dīrghaśravas,[150] who accepted the profession of trade

(*vāṇījya*), was favoured by god Aśvins. The Vedic god Agni became the favourite deity of the trader.[151] *Śulka* was coexistent with trade and commerce, as can be inferred from the references found in the Jātakas.[152]

The Dharmasūtras mention three different methods of assessment, namely, in kind as well as cash, or wholly in cash, and the rate of assessment varied according to the merchandise. Gautama lays down that the king should levy a duty of one-twentieth of the merchandise along with one article every month at less than the market price.[153]

According to Baudhāyana, the king should take from goods imported by sea a duty of ten *paṇas* in the hundred together with a choice article. For other commodities he suggests that the duty should vary according to their intrinsic value but a choice article should not be demanded.[154] The *Viṣṇu Dharmasūtra,* however, lays down a very simple rule: the king should levy a duty of one-tenth on indigenous merchandise and one-twentieth on foreign merchandise.[155]

The Buddhist scriptures also refer to taxes on trade, but the information is meagre. We have mention of *śulkaśālā* established by kings in public assembly halls, in halting places, on rivers and at village gateways for collecting custom duties.[156] In another passage we have mention of *śulkatthana*.[157]

That taxation was not heavy on commerce can probably be justified by these statements: "Let him (king) also levy just duties on other marketable goods according to their intrinsic value without oppressing the traders."[158] "Only such dues as were presented in the canons (*yathoktam*), and no arbitrary imposts, were to be realised from the merchants."[159]

Currency and exchange in the Vedic period was usually based on simple barter. This can be inferred from words like *pratipaṇa* or *prapaṇa*.[160] Cattle was also probably used for barter, however golds as medium of exchange is evidenced in the *Ṛgveda*.[161] Interestingly we also find mention of *niṣka*:[162] a gift of a hundred *niṣkas* of gold is recorded.[163] Besides *niṣka* the word *māna* probably used in the same sense is also found.[164] Macdonell and Keith offer the following explanation:

> As early as *Ṛgveda* traces are seen of the use of *niṣka* as a sort of currency, for a singer celebrates the receipts of a hundred studs and a hundred *niṣkas*. He could hardly require the *niṣkas* merely for the purpose of personal adornment.[165]

The buying and selling of articles was carried on in the open market by public auction.[166] Secret bargain was considered fraudulent.[167] For every

article the state declared the price.[168] Any excess charged over the declared price went to the state.[169] The state also examined the quality of the articles offered for sale in the market and checked the weights and measure.[170] While determining the declared price of an article, due attention was paid to the cost of production and normal profit. The theory of producers' surplus was the key doctrine in the economic policies of India.[171] The king, even in times of emergency did not encroach upon the producers' surplus,[172] because in that case the volume of production would dwindle resulting in a loss of revenue.

Concepts of modern economics can be discerned when Kauṭilya[173] says that the superintendent of commerce shall be conversant with the conditions of high or low price of goods and the quick and slow saleability of various kinds of goods whether brought into the country by the land or water route. He should also know the appropriate time for buying and selling and expanding or contracting his stock.

In the time of the Sūtra-writer Gautama,[174] debt or usury became a lawful occupation together with tillage, cattle-breeding and trade. Pāṇini mentions (*kuṣīda*) and several terms associated with moneylending and banking such as creditor (*uttamarṇa*), debtor (*adhamarṇa*), loan (*ṛṇa*), and interest (*vṛddhi*). In the time of the Jātakas, it was quite common to start a business by contracting loan of commodites on interest.[175] We know that the Gahapati offered money as a loan for trade to the shopkeepers who were shrewd, clever and resourceful.[176] The normal rate of interest was 1.25 per cent per month or 15 per cent per annum.[177] Kauṭilya, on the other hand, outlines an elaborate machinery for the assessment and collection of this tax. Traders had to pay every day one *kākāni*[178] towards the charge of stamping the weights and measures. This was charge for the certificate of weights and measures. Another item of trade tax was that paid by importers. Duties were levied at the ports, at checkposts on rivers and on the seacoast at the ferries, at the frontier, and, last but not least, within the urban area. Probably appraisers were selected to assess the value of the merchandise. The assessment was always done in cash. For precious materials imported the valuations was probaby done by experts.

Certain measures were in force for that we today call export promotion.[179] Foreign markets were surveyed.[180] The cost of materials and the payment to be made to the foreign king in the shape of toll charges (*śulka*), road cess (*vartanī*), conveyance cess (*ativāhika*), ferry charges (*taradeya*), the tax to be paid at the military stations (*gulmādeya*),

subsistence fees of the merchants and their followers as well as the share (*bhāga*) for the foreign king, were to be calculated for proper management of export promotion.

In the *Ṛgveda, śulka* clearly means price.[181] Bühler[182] translates the term *śulka* as "duties and taxes." In the Sūtras it is however used more as a synonym for *kara*.[183] Shamasastry has translated *śulka* as toll.[184] The rate of *śulka* varied from 4 per cent to 20 per cent ad valorem according to the usage of the locality. The following rates of *śulka* had been fixed by Kauṭilya:[185] (1) fruits, flowers, roots, bulbous roots, dried fish, and dried meat 16.6 per cent, (2) cotton goods, fibrous garments, silk, wool, raw material for fibrous garments, carpets, iron, sulphur, dye, spices, wine, skin, and ivory 6.6 per cent to 10 per cent, (3) cotton, fibres, thread, medicines, liquor, salt, sugar, oil, grains, wood, and claypots 4 per cent to 5 per cent, (4) other commodities 20 per cent, (5) on diamonds, precious stones, pearls and corals, the amount of duty to be determined by expert appraisers after examining the materials. Evasion of payment of toll taxes was heavily fined. The amount of fine was eight times the toll and sometimes even the commodity was confiscated.[186]

Special officers or *adhyakṣas* were selected to collect the different duties. To name a few of these officers: The Lavaṇādhyakṣa collected the excise and custom duties on salt. The Nāvādhyakṣa imposed duties at the ports. The Antapāla and the Śulkādhyakṣa levied duties on merchandise at the city toll house. The duties were usually levied on a sliding scale.[187] Kauṭilya made a complete arrangement for collection of *śulka* at the city toll house. The elaborate arrangements were intended to ensure complete security against evasion of tax, at the same time to ensure that the public got the benefit of sale at a fixed price and the merchants gained by securing a bonded warehouse where goods could be kept before the payment of *śulka*.

The Śulkādhyakṣa ususlly erected a *śulkaśālā* or toll house marked with a distinctive flag near the main gateway of the city. Merchants had to have their goods examined at the frontier by the Antapāla (warden of the marches) who fixed his stamp after examining the goods. In the city the toll collector recorded details like name, starting place and quantity of merchandise along with the official stamp. Penalties ranging from fines to imprisonment were enumerated for offences like tampering with the official stamp, for understating the quantity or value of goods, for fraudulent concealment of valuable goods or avoiding the toll house to evade payment of *śulka*, etc. Spies in various guises roamed the city to catch such delinquents. The

śulka was paid after the sale of the merchandise by public proclamation at the toll house. This ensured the merchants a bonded warehouse. Though the *śulka* laws were so stringent, certain articles were exempt from it like goods intended for marriage, for sacrifice, for worship, for certain ceremonies, for treatment of women during delivery, even rare agricultural goods. In short whatever was beneficial to individuals or society was exempt from *śulka*. On the other hand, the export of prohibited articles was punished with fines and confiscation of goods. Anything that was a source of affliction and harm was to be destroyed.

The time and places of ferry services were predetermined and the people had to cross the river at those places during the fixed hours. The rates as per the *Arthaśāstra* were: a man, a minor quadruped, 1 *māśā*; a cow, a horse, 2 *māśās*; a camel, a buffalo, 4 *māśās*; a small cart, 5 *māśās*; a medium cart, 6 *māśās*; a big cart, 7 *māśās*. In big rivers the charges were double the above rates.[188] A pregnant woman or an ascetic or a Brāhmaṇa was exempted from paying the ferry toll.[189] Seafaring merchants had to pay the customary toll levied in port towns. Ships that touched at the harbours had to pay toll charges.[190] Exemption to the extent of 50 per cent was allowed to vessels carrying merchandise spoilt by water. Octroi was also levied, in accordance with commercial practices the world over.[191] In addition to octroi duty, goods entering the city had to pay the *dvāradeya* or gate-tax. The rate was twenty per cent of the octroi duty and was in the nature of a surcharge.[192] Road cess or *vartani* was collected by the officer-in-charge of the boundaries on all goods entering the state.[193] The rates of *vartani* were: (1) a horse, 1 *paṇa*; (2) a cow, 1/2 *paṇa*; (3) a minor quadruped, 1/4 *paṇa*; and (4) a cartload of merchandise, 1¼ *paṇas*; *ativāhikam*,[194] a carriage cess was collected by the boundary-keeper. This was an additional tax. Custom duties, were levied upon commodities imported into or exported out of the country.[195] The gerenal rate of import duty was twenty per cent on the value of the goods, while the rate of export duty was ten per cent. Baudhāyana[196] fixes ten per cent as import duty. Kauṭilya prescribed the import duty of salt as one-sixth portion of the imported product.[197]

In the *Arthaśāstra*[198] there is mention of Chinese fabrics, cotton fabrics of Madhurā, woollen products of Paṇḍyā, various articles, e.g., pearls, from Kāmarūpa (Assam), Siṁhala (Ceylon), and Persia. "Large quantities of Indian merchandise were conveyed by the Oxus to the Caspian Sea."[199] The merchandise was brought down from Arabia and India to Myos

Hormos. According to Pliny,[200] indigo and crystals were imported into Rome from India. In the east the leading entrepot of the Roman empire was Antioch to which came Chinese goods, and Alexandria the second city of the Roman empire was the entrepot for the products of India.

The officer-in-charge of boundaries, Antapāla made good arrangement any loss incurred on the way and arranged for the safety of the merchandise[201] and also granted exemption from *vyāji* (premium).[202] Mariners and merchants importing foreign goods got remission in trade tax.[203] Foreigners were also exempt from being sued for debts. Licence duties and fees came under excise. The manufacture and sale of liquor was under state control. But on special occasions like fairs and feasts and during festivals private manufacture of some kind of liquor was permitted for the concerned days. The state collected licence fees from such private manufacturers for the period for which the licences were granted.[204] Apart from the licence fees there was five per cent duty on import of liquor.[205] On salt a threefold duties were collected by the salt superintendent:[206] excise duty, customs duty and a consumers tax.[207] Sales tax was collected under two heads, viz., tax levied on sales in general and tax on the sale of particular articles.[208]

The businessman was entitled to a certain amount of profits.[209] Normal profit was permitted as remuneration for the organiser. The superintendent of commerce fixed a profit of five per cent over the price fixed for local commodities and ten per cent on foreign goods.[210] The element of unearned income was also brought under the category of excess profit, e.g., when a bidder during the sale of land and building enhanced its value, the increase went to the state.[211] A tax, *pārśva* was collected "where there was some margin left for such collection."[212] This tax was in the nature of excess profit tax. Thus this tax appears to have been a regular tax in ancient India. There was also professional tax. Certain professionals had to pay tax in the form of licence fees, like actors, dancers, musicians, and prostitutes.[213] An income-tax was also levied on professionals like actors, musicians, dancers, jugglers, singers, buffoons, mimics, rope-dancers, heralds, and wandering bards.[214] The general poll tax was imposed on every member of the family including the children.[215] Undesirable foreigners or *vāhīrikas* had to pay a tax to enter the city.[216] The gambling tax, according to Kauṭilya who gives details about it, was an important source of revenue.[217] *Kara* has been interpreted by Shamasastry[218] as taxes paid in money. According to Kauṭilya this source of revenue comes under *rāṣṭra*[219] or

country, and was a distinct source of revenue. He further enjoins that land prepared for cultivation should be given to the taxpayer (*karada*) only for life.[220] Here (*karada*) probably means the tenants of the crown lands,and *kara* the tax on the crown lands. *Vāstuka* was also a source of revenue.[221] Kauṭilya explains the term *vāstu* as houses, fields, gardens, buildings of any kind, lakes and tanks.[222] In the Jātakas *vattu* means "site."[223] One of the duties of the Gopas was to number the houses[224] as tax-paying (*karada*) and non-tax-paying (*akarada*), and also to collect from each house, gold, grain, cattle, raw materials or free labour.

In the *Arthaśāstra, rajju* denotes a unit of length for measurement of land.[225] From this was probably derived the concept of *rajukas* in Aśoka's regime. It probably indicated some kind of survey tax. *Chorarajju* is a kind of police tax and Chorarajjuka probably meant the police officer. In the *Arthaśāstra:* "Whatever of their merchandise is stolen or lost in the intervening places between any two villages shall the Superintendent of Pasture make good. If there are no pasture land in such places the officer called Chorarajjuka shall make good the loss."[226] The *klrpta*[227] was a tax levied on villages on the seashore or on the banks of rivers and lakes. It was probably levied on places which had the advantage of being a port and harbour and thus had more facilities for trade. The *piṇḍakara* was imposed on villages and not on individuals and was collected annually in kind.[228] *Utsaṅga*[229] was levied during certain special occasions, e.g., the birth of a prince. The Jātaka[230] refers to people bringing one *kahapāṇa* each for a new born prince's milk money or *kṣīramūlam* which a pious king did not want to keep, but the people insisted upon giving. "During the king's hair washing ceremony, the people vied with one another in making him rich presents."[231] Since the *Arthaśāstra*[232] mentions presents to the king as a miscellaneous source of revenue *utsaṅga* might have been a special tax occasionally. *Senābhakta* was a tax probably levied during a war. It was paid when the army was preparing for an expedition. The tax was usually paid in the form of provisions required by the army such as oil, rice, and salt.[233]

Non-tax revenue included revenue from crown lands,[234] forests,[235] mines,[236] fines, profits from coinage, invisible income from services rendered, manufacture of liquor, forests and other such items[237] from marines,[238] mints, etc. There is mention of *vaidhāraṇa* which was probably paid by private miners.[239]

Miscellaneous revenues consisted of: Treasure troves discovered[240] went

to the state treasury. Heirless property included all unclaimed property except that which belonged to a man or a woman for whom no funeral rites had been performed and that which belonged to a *śrotṛya*,[241] presents or *aupayanikam*,[242] compensation,[243] passport fees, fines and interests.

An interesting source of revenue besides cesses was exaction of compulsory service (*viṣṭi*). The importance of *viṣṭi* can be judged from the entry of this term in the Samahartas' grand register of villages.[244] That *viṣṭi* was a common feature can be judged from the fact that it was to be increased as a natural corollary to undisturbed cultivation of fields by the peasantry in newly colonized area.[245] *Viṣṭi* was probably assessed on the basis of tenements or *gṛhas* in the village and the amount due from each *gṛha* was recorded by the Gopa. This labour was used in state factories, (*karmantas*), its amount being entered under each head by the state record officer Akṣapaṭalādhyakṣa in his grand register.[246] The *viṣṭi* consisted of sweepers, watchmen, persons engaged in weighing and measuring raw materials, marketing finished product as well as slaves and free labourers while engaged in the state store-house.[247] In military administration especially in the battlefield the *viṣṭi* was employed for guarding the camp and removing the wounded.[248] They also contributed to the success of attack,[249] and siege of a fortress.[250] The *viṣṭi* was probably provided regular supply of provision and other allowances as can be inferred from their inclusion in the *vyayaśarīra* list, or sources of state expenditure.[251] This exaction of forced labour could be a potential source of oppression to the cultivators for we find the same Kauṭilya admonishing kings to restore the ruined agriculture caused by exaction of *viṣṭi*, fines and illegal taxes.[252]

The Jātaka stories corroborate this concept of compulsory service. One of the Jātakas relates the story of how all the subjects of king of Vārāṇasī were forced to accompany him on his hunting expedition to the neglect of their own occupations, and how they eventually persuaded the king by driving a great herd of deer into his presence, to be spared from this service.

Kauṭilya provides for extraordinary sources of revenue[253] to be utilized only during king's financial emergencies. According to him,

> financial troubles arise due to stagnation of financial position, loss of wealth due to allowance of remission of taxes in favour of the leaders, scattered revenue, false accounts of revenue collected, and revenue left in the custody of a neighbouring king or a wild tribe.[254]

He lays down that the total volume of expenditure should be within one-

fourth of the total revenue, as the charges for maintaining his subjects.[255] The *Mahābhārata* enjoins that expenditure should never exceed three-fourths of the king's income.[256]

Kauṭilya prescribes that the state must keep reserves for rainy days,

> justly obtained either by inheritence or by self acquisition rich in gold and silver, filled with an abundance of big gems of various colours and of gold coins and capable of withstanding calamities of long durations is the best treasury.[257]

The first attempt at raising the revenue should be made by increasing the normal rate of assessment by camouflaging it as benevolences (*praṇaya*) and should be demanded from cultivators, dealers and breeders of domestic animals. If this attempt fails then the state could take recourse to force and fraud. We have already referred to two such methods while discussing the guilds. Certain other examples are, the Samaharta was employed as an agent for raising subscriptions, from the public, and other agents should confiscate the property of the Saṁghas, of heretics and of temples under suitable excuses. The Devatādhyakṣa or officer-in-charge of temples was to collect temple treasure and remit it to the state in fraudulent fashion: He could set up suddenly a "god" a platform for a holy tree and arrange for prayers and merry gatherings to obtain funds thus. The Rūpadarśaka or state examiner of coins could collect bullion from the public by fraudulent means. The state goldsmith, the Sauvarṇika similarly could collect ingots of gold. A spy disguised as a merchant could make fraudulent collection of merchandise as well as loans and deposits from the public. This was the opportunity of hauling enemies of the state, Duṣyas and sinners on trumped up charges and punish them with confiscation of their property.

It may be presumed that this advanced economic organistation sketched above continued in its main features during the Maurya period as well. In considering the land revenue and land tax, we noticed the controversy between Megasthenes's account of a cess of one-fourth and the generally accepted figure of one-sixth levied on cultivators. Independent evidence of high rate of land reveune is found in the Rummindei Pillar inscription[258] of Aśoka's time. In it is recorded the exemption of Lumbinī, the birth-place of Buddha, from *bali* and making it liable to only one-eighth of the *bhaya*. This probably goes to show that only agricultural lands were taxed in Aśoka's reign, and that the normal rate of land revenue must have been sufficiently high for the reduction to one-eighth to go on record as a great concession.

In the sphere of taxes on trade and industry too the old taxes continued. However as regards herdsmen and hunters, the third Indian caste according to Megasthenes, different versions of Megasthenes account has come down to us. According to Arrian, they lived as nomads and paid taxes for their animals. Strabo, on the other hand, says that they received a proportionate allowance of grain from the king.[259] The Dharmasūtra mentions a tax in kind payable by the owners of domestic animals.[260] Kauṭilya allows the king a share of the game captured. He also prescribes wages and provisions for herdsmen in the service of the state cow-pens.[261] Thus in the Maurya period we find the continuance of the old levy in kind on herdsmen and hunters along with maintenance of state herds and studs. As for taxes on goods sold Megasthenes fixes the rate at one-tenth,[262] while Kauṭilya does not fix any rate.

The Śulkādhyakṣa of Kauṭilya was probably replaced by a municipal committee, the sixth board of municipal commission.[263] In former times tax evasion was penalised by pecuniary fines. This was probably substituted by capital punishment during the Maurya age. Megasthenes also mentions that no one was allowed to deal in more than one commodity unless he paid a double tax.[264] This probably implies that different kinds of merchandise were assessed differently. Thus we find that no major alterations were made during the Mauryan supremacy. On raising extraordinary revenue during emergencies even by unscrupulous means, we have one reference. From Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*[265] we learn that the Mauryas raised gold (coins) by manufacturing objects of worship. If this tradition be true then we may believe that unscrupulous means were employed for filling state treasuries during Mauryan rule as well.

Unlike the exhaustive list of state revenue we have only a fragmentary and imperfect picture of the state expenditure. Only the *Arthaśāstra* provides us with a rough idea of state expenditure during the period under review. An incomplete list of the items of state expenditure, *vyāya-śarīra*, is found in Kauṭilya's description of the function of the Samaharta.[266] The expenditures relating to all the state offices, *adhikaraṇas* were to be recorded by the officer-in-charge, Akṣapaṭalādhyakṣa in his register.[267] Officers such as Koṣṭhagārādhyakṣa, Godhyakṣa and Aśvādhyakṣa all drew their remunerations in cash and kind. It will probably be worthwhile to reproduce here a table from Kauṭilya[268] for some idea of the state expenditure. We cannot however be sure whether the wages mentioned are monthly, or for some other time period, and if the prices mentioned are

normal prices. We cannot even be confident of their actuality. They may well represent a theoretical scale based on the social hierarchy of that age.

According to it forty-eight thousand *paṇas* were received by the chief priest, the king's spiritual master (Ācārya), the prime minister (Mantrin), the royal chaplain (*purohita*), the head of armies (Senāpati), the crown prince (Yuvarāja or Rājaputra), the queen mother and the chief queen. Twenty-four thousand *paṇas* to the chief police officer, the guardian of the harem (*kañcukin*), the chief of armoury and prisons (Praśastṛ), the head of the revenue department (Samahartṛ), the royal treasurer (*sannidhātṛ*). Twelve thousand *paṇas* to the princes and their mothers, the commander of an army (Nāyaka), the supervisor of manufacturers, the twelve counsellors (*mantri pariṣad*) the superintendent general, the head of the border-guard (Antapāla). Eight thousand *paṇas* to the guild masters (*śreṇīmukhya* or *śreṣṭhī*), the regimental commanding officers of the army (*hastyasvarathanukhya*). Four thousand *paṇas* were received by the chief supervisors; two thousand to the commanders of war-chariots and physicians; one thousand to fortune-tellers, bards, other supervisors, professors of repute; five hundred *paṇas* each to trained infantry, scribes and accountants, the cost price of a slave, value of an elephant (for fines); one hundred and twenty *paṇas* as wages of a craftsman;. sixty *paṇas* each to servants, medical assistants, those performing statute labour; fifty *paṇas* as the cost price of a female slave, and also the average cost of maintaining one man for a year; twenty-four *paṇas* was the value of a horse (for fines); twelve *paṇas* was the value of an ox (for fines); one and 1/4 *paṇas* as wages of a cowherd (or else the milk of one cow out of ten). One *paṇa* was the value of 123 *prasthas* of grain (probably 400 lbs.) and the value of 300 *palas* of oil (about seven gallons) (for fines). About 1/2 *paṇa* was the weekly expenditure of workman.One *māśā* or 1/16 of a *paṇa* was the price of a truss of hay. One *kākiṇī* or 1/64 of a *paṇa* was the daily expenditure of a workman.

Reference is also found to four methods of payment: by the day, by the fortnight, month and year and in two extra ways.[269] A large branch of state expenditure not accounted for is the cash payments made to the various grades of state officials and others included in the king's Civil List.

Kauṭilya[270] classified public expenditure according to the heads and nature of the expenditure. In the *Arthaśāstra* we find mention of twenty-two government departments connected with different activities of the state.

These departments are those of goldsmiths including mint; storehouse; commerce; tolls; weaving; agriculture; liquor; slaughter-house; prostitutes; ships; cows; horses; elephants; chariots; infantry; armoury; forests; passport; weights and measures; mines and manufacture; treasury; and revenue. In another section of the same source only eighteen are mentioned (*aṣṭadaśatīrtha*).[271] Another classification is according to the nature of expenditure:[272] as daily expenditure (*divassānuvṛttonitya*) and profitable expenditure, i.e., expenditure on investments yielding profit, (*lābhotpādika*).

Military expenditure included, that on combatants, including the regular army and mercenary soldiers; expenditure on the salaries of these personnel, the commissariat and war efforts, which consisted of expenditure on equipment, such as horses, elephants, chariots and the fleet; expenditure on amoury, the arsenal, the manufacture of weapons and instruments of war; expenditure on repairs and maintenance of war equipment, and on miscellaneous activities connected with war and military operations.

According to Arrian,

> The fifth caste among the Indians consisted of the warriors, who are second in point of numbers to the husband-men but lead a life of supreme freedom and enjoyment. They have only military duties to perform. Others make their arms, and others supply them with horses, they have others to attend on them in the camp who take care of their horses, clean their arms, drive their elephants, prepare their chariots and act as their charioteers. As long as they are required to fight they fight. When peace returns they abandon themselves to enjoyment. The pay which they receive from the state being so liberal that they can with ease maintain themselves and others besides.[273]

Megasthenes observes that Candragupta maintained an army of 9,000 elephants, 30,000 horses and 600,000 infantry. In the army different nationalities were mixed together and were sent to those parts of the country where they were strangers. This was done to avoid the possibility of a revolt in the army. All these soldiers were in the payroll of the king. The king of Pāṭaliputra "has in his pay a standing army of 600,000 foot soldiers."[274]

The standing army was regularly drilled and trained by the state.[275]

The other branches of the army were supervised thus:

Cavalry: The superintendent purchased quality horses from countries like Kāmboja, Sindhu, Aratta, Vanāyu and also from Bāhlīka, Papeya, Sauvīra, and Taitala.[276] Training was provided by qualified horse trainers.

Elephants: There was a special superintendent for elephants and he was also provided with rations. The state had to maintain a forest[277] where

elephants were bred. Elephant trainers, doctors, expert riders as well as those who groomed them, those who prepared their food, those who procured their food, those who tethered them, those who cleaned the stable and the watchmen were some of the staff that had to attend to the needs of the elephants.[278] The best army was that which consisted of a strong infantry. So such elephants and horses as were noted for their birth, breed, strength, youth, vitality, capacity to run in old age, skill, firmness, obedience and good habits were a necessity.[279]

The chariot department too had a superintendent. The fighters of the chariot division were examined by the superintendent of the chariot for their skill in shooting arrows, hurling clubs, in wearing mail armour, in charioteering, in fighting seated over a chariot and in controlling the chariot horses.[280] The navy was under the charge of an admiral (Nāvādhyakṣa).[281] The existence of a royal navy can be proved from Kauṭilya's remarks that pirate ships, vessels bound for an enemy country, and also the ships which had violated customs in a port town, should be destroyed. Megasthenes[282] mentions a fleet and its admiral as well as the ship-builders. He observes that one division of magistrates in Pāṭaliputra was appointed to cooperate with the admiral of the fleet. Again, designation, such as Nāvādhyakṣa (admiral), Śāsaka (captain of a ship), Niyāmaka (steerman), and Nāvika (sailor), further corroborate the existence of a navy.

> One division of Magistrates in Pāṭaliputra was appointed to cooperate with the admiral of the fleet, another with the superintendent of bullock trains which were used for transporting engines of war, food for soldiers, provender for the cattle and other military requisites. Commissariat was to be protected or destroyed in the case of enemies by the cavalry.[283]

Among the non-combatants were[284] sappers who had to examine the roads, bridges, wells, rivers, etc.; persons driving beasts of burden like asses, camels, bulls, mules and also carts; persons carrying weapons, arms, machines, instruments and provisions; mechanics and their assistants and helpers; army physicians; veterinary surgeons; nurses; persons carrying the wounded and the injured; staff for maintaining the supply lines; staff for protecting the roads of communication; grooms and attendants of elephants and horses; carpenters; scouts; sentinels to secure the safety of the king; cooks; messengers; spies; free labourers whose work included examination of camps, roads, bridges, wells and rivers, carrying machines, weapons, armour, instruments, and provisions. In the Śāntiparva[285] arsenals, camps, quarters for soldiers and trenches are mentioned.

Besides the above sketch we can form some further idea about state expenditure from general references to state activities. State income was mainly spent on administration, maintenance of the army and the royal establishment. As the king lived in a palace with pomp and show a large part of the revenue was spent meeting the expenditure to keep up the regalities.[286] The officials both civil and military received their salaries from the royal exchequer, but the mode of payment is not described in the *sūtras*.[267] A conscientious and benevolent king, however, must have ensured expenditure on charitable endowments as well. It was laid down that the king should render financial assistance to learned and poor Brāhmaṇas, students, orphans, widows and invalid persons.[288]

An embryonic concept of the welfare state can be found in the *Arthaśāstra*.[289] Justice was the first duty of state and king. The life of a king should be dedicated to duty. This idea is well expressed in Aśoka's edict:[290]

> Work I must for the welfare of all the folk (*sarvatakahitam*), and of that again the root is energy and the despatch of business for nothing is more essential than the welfare of all the folk. And whatever efforts I make they are made that I may attain release from my debt to animate being so that while in the world I may make some persons happy they may win heaven in the world beyond. For that purpose I have caused this scripture of the law to be written in order that it may endure while my sons, grandsons and great grandsons may take action for the welfare of all folk that however is difficult save by utmost exertion.

The state shared the family burden. The importance of the family as the basic unit of society and state was appreciated. When a capable person other than an apostate (*patita*) or a mother neglected to maintain his or her child, wife, mother, father, minor brothers, sisters or widowed girls, he or she was punished. Persons embracing asceticism without making any provision for the maintenance of wives and childern were also not encouraged. The state also acted as a court of wards and protected the property of minors till they attained majority. The state also provided maintenance for orphans, the aged, the infirm, the afflicted and the helpless. Subsistence to helpless women was granted by the state when they were pregnant, and also to the children they gave birth to.[291] The orphans (*asambandhinaḥ*), were fed by the state and were put to study science, palmistry, sorcery, the duties of various orders of life and after proper training, the qualified trainees were recruited as spies.[292]

Medical relief was organised and controlled by the state. A site was set

apart by the state for medical stores (*bhaiṣajyagṛha*) in the layout of a metropolitan city. As the king's private medical store was inside the royal palace,[293] this was definitely meant for the public. The Sitādhyakṣa or the superintendent of crown lands arranged for cultivation of medicinal plants and herbs on the appropriate land.[294] Megasthenes[295] reports,

> Should any of him (foreigners) loose health, they send physicians to attend on him and take care of him otherwise and if he dies they bury him and deliver over such properties as he leaves to his relatives.

Aśoka[296] extended the medical relief to animals as well.

The state provided for asylums for the destitute and needy. The king set up homes for the distribution of food, and places for distribution of water and excavated tanks.[297] In a Jātaka it is mentioned that poor houses were erected at each of the four city gates.[298]

The state gave work to the unemployed, among whom were widows, crippled and old women, mothers of prostitutes. Rural labourers and peasants were protected against victimistation by outside agents like actors, dancers, singers, drummers, buffoons, and bards.[299]

Wages were determined according to the contract made with the workers either individually or collectively. In the former case wages were received from the employer for the work assigned and carried out. In the latter, payment was made to a group of workers employed for the purpose of the work each getting his dues as settled between themselves. Qualification, the absolute necessaries of life and the standard of life were taken into account while determining wages. In matters of public health there was a ban on unwholesome food and medicines. The Saṁsthādhyakṣa (controller of establishment) was entrusted with the work of implementing the state ban on unwholesome food, meat, drugs, and edible products and littering.[300]

In education, learned Brāhmaṇas were granted *brahmadeya* lands where they pursued scholarly activities, and taught the students in their (the teachers') residences.

"The land in the possession of Nalanda University contained more than two hundred villages. They were bestowed upon it by kings of many generations."[301] The cost of museums and libraries were borne by the state. Menageries and museums of animals were placed under the charge of the superintendent of forest,[302] and thus it was classified as an item of public expenditure.

From the Mauryan epoch onwards, monarchs attached great importance to the construction of highways and roads, supervising them personally. Megasthenes[303] records their excellence.[304] The construction of such roads naturally required the cooperation of a whole army of technicians, architects, engineers and carpenters, assisted by woodcutters, rope-makers, road-menders, labourers and assorted hirelings.[305] This entire assembly of workers and technicians must have been remunerated in some manner by the state.

Rest-houses for travellers and pilgrims were built,[306] and were provided with wells or artificial lakes for water supply. All this was done at "state cost." New mines, colonisation of waste land, construction of roads, town planning, reclamation of land were also undertaken by the state.[307] The state also supervised the erection of alms-houses or *dānaśālāḥ*.[308] Relief against natural calamities like fire, flood, famine and pestilence was porvided.[309] Fire-fighting equipment was provided at the royal palace out of crossings of roads. Tubs and pots filled with water, ladders, axes, winnowers, hooks, leather bags to carry water were arranged for.[310]

During floods[311] people were removed up country, provided with wooden planks, bamboos and boats. Banks and high bunds were constructed. Afforestation to prevent soil erosion was undertaken Kauṭilya well realised that famine caused trouble to the whole country, caused dearth of livelihood to all creatures.[312] Megasthenes,[313] thus records,

> It is accordingly affirmed that famine has never visited India and that there has never been a general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food. Since on agriculture depended the prosperity of the whole country the state, one can conclude, must have been actively involved in providing favourable treatment to the agriculturists.

The administration of the state revenue was closely monitored, according to the *Arthaśāstra*. The king was to hear reports of income and expenditure as a part of his daily routine and thus be aware of the financial situation of his country.[314] The Samaharta (revenue officer) was to follow a policy of increasing income and diminishing expenditure.[315] While describing the function of the Sannidhāta,[316] another revenue officer, Kauṭilya says that this officer was to be conversant with the income of the state from inside and outside: he should be able to answer questions about the income of the state for the last one hundred years and that he should be able to state the net balance left after meeting all the expenditure.

Expenditure relating to the royal household centred round the harem, the kitchen, and miscellaneous items.

The beauty and grandeur of the royal palace had to be maintained. There were huge circuit houses which had always to be kept ready.

The Avarodhanas (members of the harem) of Aśoka were not all in Pāṭaliputra. Some of its members stayed in the mofussil areas.[317] The royal harem was to be constructed on "a site best fitted for the purpose which should consist of many compartments one within the other, enclosed by a parapet and ditch and provided with a door"[318] "The king shall construct his own residential palace after the model of his treasury house or he may have his residential abode in the centre of the delusive chamber (*mohanagṛha*) provided with secret passages made into the walls or in underground chambers, provided with figures of goddesses and altars carved on wooden door frames and connected with many underground passages for exit,or in an upper story provided with a staircase hidden in a wall, with a passage for exit made in a hollow pillar the whole building so constructed with mechanical contrivances as to be caused to fall down when necessary. . . ." "On one side in the rear of the harem there shall be made, for the residence of women, compartments provided not only with all kinds of medicines useful in midwifery and diseases but also with well-known pot herbs (*prakhyātasaṁstha vṛkṣa*) and a water reservoir. Outside these compartments, the residence of princes and princesses, in front (of the latter building) the toilet ground (*alaṁkāra bhūmiḥ*), the council ground (*mantra bhūmiḥ*), the court and the offices of the heir apparent and of superintendents. In the intervening places between the two compartments the army of the officer-in-charge of the harem shall be stationed."[319]

The salary[320] structure mentioned is, the heir apparent, the queen mother and queen— 48,000 *paṇas* each per annum, payment in the form of a privy purse and not as salary. Doorkeeper, chamberlain, superintendent of harem (Antaravaṁsika) 24,000 *paṇas* each per annum. The prince (*kumāra*) and the nurse of the prince, 12,000 *paṇas* each per annum. The foreteller, reader of omens, astrologer, reader of Purāṇas, story-tellers, the bard (*māgadha*), 1,000 *paṇas* each per annum. Playmates of the king (*āryayukta*), teacher, learned men—honorariums ranging from 500 to 1000 *paṇas* each per annum according to merit. Trumpet-blower (*turyakāra),* 500 *paṇas* per annum each; musician (*kuśilava*), 250 *paṇas* each per annum. Attendants upon the royal person, 60 *paṇas* each per annum. Other officials like Kañcuki (presenter of king's coats), Uṣṇīṣi (presenter of king's head-dresses and midwives) also received some kind of remuneration.

The royal kitchen was a big establishment. The *mahānāsika* (head cook) was in-charge of the royal kitchen, assisted by a host of cooks and other attendants. In earlier times, in the kitchen of King Devanāmpriya Priyadarśin many hundred thousands of animals were killed daily for curries.[321]

The king increased subsistences and wages in consideration of learning and works, or granted subsistence and wages, to the sons and wives of those who died while on duty. Infants, aged persons or persons related to deceased servants, were shown favour. On occasions of funerals, sickness, or childbirth the king used to give presents to the servants concerned. For the women employed in the royal household and for the menial servants' the king had to pay a daily maintenance in proportion to their position and their work—one *paṇa* to the highest, likewise clothing every six months and one *droṇa* of grains every month.[322]

Ecclesiastical expenditures were in the nature of land grants to the Śrotriyas, presents, and payment of salaries:[323] Thus, Ṛtviks (performers of sacrifices) and Purohitas (priests) got 48,000 *paṇas* each per annum. King's charioteers in sacrifices got 1,000 *paṇas* each per annum. Person who represented the king in the Rājasūya and other sacrifices received three times as much as others equal to him in learning.

In the Mauryan period the state built many places of worship. The construction of *puṇyasthāna* (places of pilgrimage and *ārāma* (groves) were enjoined in the *Arthaśāstra*.[324] The ruins of temples and places of worship constructed by Aśoka testify to the expenditure of the state on religious activities.

> The numerous and stately monasteries which Aśoka erected at many places in the empire have shared the fate of his palaces, not even one surviving in a recognisable state.[325]

The *dharma-yātrā* of Aśoka represents the most comprehensive scheme of religious missionary enterprise, ever recorded in history. The expenditure on such royal tour and charity, the gifts of gold and other things made are mentioned in the Rock Edicts.[326] A Pillar Edict[327] records that various officers of the state were employed in the distribution of royal alms. His queens, his sons, the princes and others, were to promote pious acts.

For the purpose of general administration the country was divided into provinces. Kauṭilya prescribed four divisions.[328] The basic unit was the village, then came the Saṁgrahaṇas consisting of ten villages each, followed by the Kharvatika, a collection of two hundred villages, then Droṇamukha,

a collection of four hundred villages, and the largest, Sthāniya consisting of eight hudered villages.[329] The capital was under a separate set of officials.[330]

There was an equally elaborate system of urban administration: Nagarakas, Paura Vyāvahārikas, and Nagarādhyakṣa were some of the important officials. Different Boards of Committee for the various administrative activities is referred by Strabo.[331]

During Aśoka's time a number of new officers can be seen: Anta, Mahāmātra, Pradeśika, Yuta, Dharmamahāmātras. Different ministers for different departments of state are mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra*.[322] Gopas, Sthānikas, Adhyakṣa or superintendents of different departments, Samāhata/ Samāharta—collector of general revenue, Sannidhāta—Receiver and General Chief of the Imperial Treasury and Storehouse, Akṣapaṭala—Auditor General, Daubārika, Registrar of Complaints,Pradestārāḥ —Commissioner. Junior officials were in-charge of: Koṣādhyakṣa (treasury), Paṇyādhyakṣa (commodities and supplies), Surādhyakṣa (liquor), Gaṇikādhyakṣa (prostitutes), Sūtrādhyakṣa (weaving), Vyāvahārika (law and commerce), Dāyaka (pay clerk), Dūta (envoy), Nagarpāla (officer-in-charge), Śailakhanaka (miner), Rūpadarśaka (coin examiner).

All the civil officers and subordinates were paid wages generally in cash.[333] Gopas, Sthānikas and some messengers were also granted land. A wage table can be found in the *Arthaśāstra*.[334] Travelling allowance had to be provided to the envoys.The king inspected annually the cities, districts and provinces to gain information about the condition of the people, inspect the running of the administrative machinery and to hear the grievances of the people.These tours must have been rather expensive considering that every arrangement had to be made for the king's comfort.

The judiciary and police were well organized and due importance attached to them. The judges were well conversant with laws and were paid by the state. Megasthenes[335] says that the judges also decided cases in which foreigners were involved, with the greatest care and came down sharply on those who took unfair advantage of this.

State undertakings encompassed trade in articles manufactured in state workshops. Manufacturing units included weaving of clothes, articles from forest products, articles of tin, bronze, copper, etc.[336] The State also employed labour[337] permanently or temporarily, paid their wages, arranged for provision for the artisans.

Irrigation was an important item of state expenditure.[338] The king increased the number of tanks and wells for irrigation by either constructing new ones or repairing damaged ones. The king also helped private individuals to build and restore minor irrigation works by providing sites timber and other materials.[339]

This account of the economic aspect of the age cannot be complete without a survey of the prevailing gift system. The existence of any social institution over a period of time presupposes its functional value to the society. Gift-making, from time immemorial has been an important means of establishing social relationship. Here we shall try to understand the immediate motives as well as the general social and cultural needs which convinced donors to make gifts. It is true that it is difficult to discern the motives of gift-making, as F.G. Bailey points out, "In this field, as in many others, we cannot talk of motivations, for there is no means of knowing what are the 'real' springs of human action."[340] However, an attempt can be made by examining the motives mentioned in contemporary texts, from the results the gifts were expected to produce and the occasions during which gifts were made.[341]

According to the rules of good conduct, the householder was enjoined to give food to his guests, infants, old and sick people, females under his protection (i.e., daughters, sisters, etc.) pregnant women, and to the people of low condition (i.e., servants and the like) in his house, before taking his meal.[342] Thus we find that the seed of gift-making can be seen in the simple act of kindness beginning at home, in the concept of "charity begins at home."The Dharmasūtras further enjoin the householder to make, of course according to his means, gifts of money to those who come begging for their gurus, or for meeting the expenses of a wedding, or for performing a sacrifice, or for procuring medicine for the sick; to those who are without any means of livelihood or to those engaged in study, to travellers and to those who have performed the Viśvajit sacrifice.[343] The Sūtrakāras, however, warn against those who beg for unlawful purposes or for sensual gratification: such people were not be paid any heed to.[344]

Human beings by nature are bound to make mistakes. Therefore, always the desire for atonement of sins lurks in the human conscience. Probably to cater to this desire, particular gifts were declared as means of purging oneself of guilt. Thus we find Vaśiṣṭha stipulating that through the gift of sesamum grains "the guilt which he (the donor) has incurred during his whole life will instantly vanish."[345] Gautama, however, mentions more

expensive gifts for expiation: "gold, cow, dress, horse, land, clarified butter and food are the gifts which destroy sin."[346] In the epics also we find references to gifts as the means of destroying sin.

> After committing numerous sins a person makes gifts of earth unto members of the regenerate class. He casts off all those sins just as a snake casts off its slough.[347]

Gift-making was also advocated for gaining rewards. There is mention of various articles of gift which could ensure definite rewards, such as, the belief that the gift of an umbrella ensured a house, while the gift of a pair of shoes secured a vehicle.[348] The Buddhist text *Dīghanikāya* also openly stated "that which he gives he hopes to receive in his turn."[349]

The prescription of endowing gifts made by law-givers on certain occasions was probably heeded to by the common man and royalty for superstitious fears about the evil eye. This was the reason which probably prompted people to make gifts on occasions like Nāmakaraṇa, Cūḍākaraṇa (tonsure), initiation, marriage, coronation and embarking on fresh business ventures. The *Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra* states, "on the occasion of a lucky event or of a meritorious work a person should give food to an even number of Brāhmaṇas"[350] In the Jātakas we find traders before embarking on a business venture visiting the master with gifts.[351]

Probably the most dominant feeling of a human being is self-preservation. Therefore we find people making gifts to gain merit, fame, power, happiness, etc.[352] self-interest being the main motive behind the *dāna*.

With the passage of time, the entire socio-economic fabric also underwent major changes. The caste system with its divisive forces entrenched itself. In the description of the prescribed occupations of the various castes we find that giving gifts was one of the lawful occupations of the three upper castes but receiving gifts was the sole privilege of the Brāhmaṇas. In the period referred to as the Brāhmaṇic epoch we find the priests at the helm of society with broad social powers at their disposal. At the height of Brāhmaṇa ascendancy the state sometimes appeared nothing more than an adjunct of the social order that exalted the priest and his prerogatives.

In the economic sphere there was a change from the old pastoral economy to an economy marked by remarkable technological growth, surplus production and a widening gap between the producer and consumer. Surplus production helped the creation of a ruling class on the

basis of taxes and the army. The rapidly growing territorial base of the emergent monarchical state led to a total disintegration of the tribal order with a consequent loosening of kinship ties. The surplus production also helped craft specialisation and trade activities. Craft specialisation led to the withdrawal of one social section, the Brāhmaṇas, from all productive activities. Trade activities gave rise to a considerable mercantile community who managed to appropriate large amounts of wealth in the shape of profits. Wealth now came to be concentrated in the hands of the ruling class and the merchant class. This naturally threatened the Brāhmaṇas, who had completely withdrawn from productive activity, but on the basis of their superior religious knowledge had made a niche for themselves in the social order. Their position appeared to be threatened by the politically powerful, rich Kṣatriyas and the economically powerful Vaiśyas.

The Brāhmaṇas thus juggled with the age-old drives and urges of gift-making to make *dāna* a compulsory virtue for all those possessing wealth. The idea instead of being hoarded, wealth ought to find its way into gifts for the Brāhmaṇas became evident. Wealth could not be used to win the favour of the gods without the intervention of the priests, they said. The Brāhmaṇas again secured themselves a strategic position. Gautama recommends stern action against those who persisted with non-giving.[353] We have already noted in dealing with the motives the different reasons given to entice people to make gifts. Vain would be wealth if the Brāhmaṇa did not exist to receive it. Yudhiṣṭhira is told

> 'to celebrate a great sacrifice with enough presents of all sorts and a sufficient quantity of the earth's produce. If you do not perform that sacrifce, O king,the sins of this kingdom will visit you.'[354] 'Gift of gold, gift of kine, and gift of earth—these are considered as sin cleaning. They rescue the giver from his evil deeds. O, king always make such gifts to the righteous. Forsooth, gifts rescue the giver from all his sins.'[335]

The Brāhmaṇas' ability to demand gifts from others was not based on their own gifts but the performance of a service, the absolving of sin.

Not just Brāhmaṇical texts even Buddhist texts preach against hoarding of wealth. In the *Saṁyuttanikāya* a king dictates, "of the revenue coming in from the outlying provinces one-half shall be sent into the palace and one-half shall there and then be given as gifts to those who ask—Brāhmaṇas, recluses, paupers and cripples, wayfarers and beggars."[356] In a Jātaka we find,

> Not as much as the tiniest drop of oil that a blade of grass will take up, did he either give away or consume for his own enjoyment. So he made no use of his wealth either for his family or for sages and Brāhmaṇas. It remained unenjoyed like a pool haunted by demons.[357]

The *Dhammapada* mentions a merchant who invited a congregation of monks to be his guest and gave them alms for seven days.[358]

Probably the heterodox texts emphasized this kind of gift-making to prevent the disasters of polarization of wealth as well as to avoid the hazards of capital going out of circulation. N.K. Bose has summarized this aspect very well: "If the class differences brought about a growing inequality of income, as they were likely to do, the evils of increasing polarization could be offset by the custom of conspicuous expenditure. Any one who spent lavishly in beneficent acts or even in sheer exhibitionism, was applauded more than one who hoarded. A practice was likewise built up in connection with birth, marriage and funerary ceremonies in which even the poorest householder had to make gifts to priests even by incurring debts."[359] R. Shamasastry quotes an ancient verse to echo the same sentiment:

> Wealth has four kinsmen claimants (i) charity, (ii) fire, (iii) the king, and (iv) the thief; at the disregard shown to the eldest of them the three remaining brothers will be enraged.[360]

The strengthening of the institution of private property especially in land led to the rise of rich Gahapatis who swelled the ranks of the donors. A spirit of individualism began to take birth now, leading to strong disaffection, personal insecurity and egotistical aspirations. Insecurity and disaffection led many to join the new religions (Buddhism and Jainism) to seek salvation. Others, in contrast, gave *dāna* in order to get back much more in the other world. As a *prāyaścitta* for being egotistical and the growing belief in *karma* or rebirth in higher or lower forms according to one's deeds made individuals take recourse to *dāna*.

As already noted in the beginning, by the time of the Dharmasūtras, *dāna* to Brāhmaṇa, the poor, to all sentient beings had become encumbent on all householders. The Brāhmaṇical law-givers based their theory upon the fourfold debt concept . . . debt to the gods, *devas*, to the sages, *ṛṣis*, to the manes, *pitṛs* and all living creatures, *bhūta*. These debts could be discharged by making appropriate *dāna* either directly or through the spiritual representatives, the Brāhmaṇas. Through Devayajña,[361] the gods were pacified, the sages through Brahmayajña.[362] The manes were offered

tarpaṇa or *śrāddha* at Pitṛyajña[363] and cooked food offerings were made at Bhūtayajña.[364]

That even Buddhist lay followers practised alms-giving can be inferred from the statement: "Multitudes going before breakfast to give alms."[365] It was quite common for householders to support Bhikkhus.[366]

As in modern India so in the past feeding Brāhmaṇas, receiving their blessings and giving *dakṣiṇā*[367](fees or sacrificial fees) were compulsory during *saṁskāras*. This custom was prevalent even during the Buddhist age as can be seen from the Jātaka references.

> On the day when he was to be named the parents enquired as to their child's destiny from 800 Brāhmaṇas to whom they gave their hearts' desire in all pleasure of sense.[368]

Since the institution of *dāna* created an alternative source of subsistence for religious medicants and ascetics many laymen flocked to their ranks with the aim of leading an easy life. Thus large groups were withdrawn from socially productive activities. Perhaps it was this situation which led Kauṭilya to prescribe a fine for all those who either renounced home to become ascetics without providing for their sons and wives, or those who enticed women to renounce home.[369]

Thus we see that the gift system slowly permeated the whole social structure. We can explain it as an attempt by the Brāhmaṇas to secure their postition in a changing socio-economic milieu, or in a more secular interpretation as redistribution of wealth, inculcating a sense of social awareness among householders, facing the challenge of a competitive spirit, or bracing up to the breaking of an entire old system of tribal order. Before we conclude a look at the effect this system had later becomes imperative.

Gifts like food, clothing, vehicles, animals, slaves and precious metals have been extensively showered upon the donee since early times. however, land did not figure so extensively as an item of gift or sale,[370] for a long time, in fact upto the beginning of the Mauryan period. This was probably because ownership land for purposes of residence and cultivation,[371] was recognised but had still not become an item which could be disposed of at will.

The king, we find, even after having broken away from the tribal responsibility of distributing the spoils among tribal chiefs, continued to lavishly endow gifts, specially during sacrifices like the Rājasūya or the Aśvamedha. With the development of territorial states the king had begun to extort taxes from the subjects. Perhaps it was a stricken conscience that

led to royal gift-making. "The king should be content with the name he wins and the umbrella that is held over his head. He should divide the wealth of the kingdom among those that serve him. Alone he should not appropriate everything."[372]

Kings, probably in their attempt to assert their superiority and power, squandered magnificent and valuable gifts. In the *Dhammapada* we find the king and the citizens vying with each other in making magnificent gifts.[373]

Now began an increasing number of royal grants of tax free land and village revenue to religious beneficiaries. In lieu of these gifts the king desired the validation of newly won political power. This is the reason probably why Kauṭilya enjoins.

> After acquisition of new territory he (king) should cover the enemy's faults with his own virtues. He should carry out what is agreeable and beneficial to the subjects by doing his own duty as laid down, granting favours, giving exemptions, making gifts and showing favours.[374]

Gifts to religious beneficiaries by aboriginal kings or donors of Central Asian origin was to gain formal recognition in society. "Rich gifts of cattle, money, jewellery and above all land were compensations for Brāhamaṇas who provided the necessary proofs of genteel descent for the Hinduised ruling stratum of an area undergoing assimilation."[375]

Land did not constitute a popular object of gift by non-princely donors, but the gift of land both waste and cultivated, by princely donors is remarkable. Law-makers recommend land grants to Brāhmaṇas.[376] This was probably the result of the growth of the territorial state and the recognition of the full property right of the king over at least a portion of his territorial possessions. Actual grants are recorded in the *Dīghanikāya,* where Brāhmaṇa Sondanda of Campa was granted "a place teeming with life with much grassland and woodlands and water and corn on a royal domain granted to him by Seniya Bimbisāra as a royal fief with powers over it as if he were the king."[377] Another Brāhmaṇa Canki received a similar gift from king Pasenadi of Kosala.[378] The epics corroborate the above system. In the *Mahābhārata* it is mentioned "hundreds upon hundreds of Brāhmaṇas possessing wealth of kine lived upon the lands that Yudhiṣṭhira had given them."[379] The *Rāmāyaṇa* mentions a great monarch who gave large portions of the earth in charity to the officiating priests.[380] Upto foruth centruy BC we find gifts of villages were more common as it

entailed transfer of the right to collect revenue by the donee, not conferment of property rights.

Lands were donated to Brāhmaṇas or to Buddhist and Jaina Saṁghas by the queens or royal officials, or by private individuals or guilds for religious merit. There is even a record of a Brāhmaṇa donating land to another Brāhmaṇa. Vasudevasvāmin, a Brāhmaṇa of Varaka-maṇḍala donated a piece of land to the virtuous Brāhmaṇa Somasvāmin for his own religious merit and for that of his parents.[381]

The *Arthaśāstra*[382] also refers to land grants to Brāhmaṇas with the right of alienation: to crown officers for expenses of public charities: to queens and princes, officials, for payment of services, to military fiefs for supplying troops. But for the last category we have no epigraphic records.

We find queen Nayanikā, the wife of Śātakarṇi donating a village as a gift (*dakṣiṇā*) in an Aśvamedha sacrifice, in the first century BC.[383] Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi who belonged to the same family donated permanently two hundred *nivartanas* of land to the Buddhist monks residing on the Trirasmi hill.[384]According to D.C. Sircar one *nivartana* of land equals 2,975 acres, so two hundred *nivartanas* comprised a little less than six hundred acres of land.[385] Thus the Buddhist monks could enjoy such a large area of land without interference by the state. Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi would accept only religious merit and no feudal obligation.

The fiscal and other exemptions and immunities are specially recorded. In most of the Gupta and post-Gupta inscriptions the same conditions are repeated,therefore citing one will suffice to understand the conditions. The Chamak plates of Mahārāja Paravarasena II[386] which donate land to one thousand Brāhmaṇas records ". . . be it known to you that, in order to inccrease our religion and life and strength and victory and dominion, (and) for the sake of (our) victorious office of justice, as a grant not previously made, with libations of water. . . . It is not to pay taxes, it is not to be entered by the regular troops or by the umbrella bearers; it does not carry with it (the right to) cows and bulls in succession of production, or to the abundance of flowers and milk, or to the pasturage, hides and charcoal, or to the mines for the purchase of salt in a moist state; it is entirely free (all obligations of) forced labour; it carries with it hidden treasures and deposits, and the Kḷpta and Upakḷpta, it is (to be enjoyed) for the same time with the moon and the sun; (and) it is to follow (the succession of) sons and sons' sons. No hindrance should be caused by any one to those who enjoy it. It should be protected and increased by all possible means.

And whosoever, disregarding this charter, shall give, or cause to be given, even slight vexation, we will inflict on him punishment, together with a fine, when he is denounced by a Brāhmaṇa. And this condition of the charter should be maintained by the Brāhmaṇas and by (future) lords: namely, (the enjoyment of this grant is to belong to the Brāhmaṇas) for the same time with the moon and the sun, provided that they commit no treason against the kindgom, consisting of seven constituent parts, of (successive) kings; that they are not slayers of Brāhmaṇas and are not thieves, adulterers, poisoners of kings, etc.; and they do not wage war; (and) they do no wrong to other villagers. But if they act otherwise or assent (to such acts) the king will commit no theft in taking the land away. . . ."

For the first time we have details about warning to the donee to act justly towards both the villagers and the state, the taxes and other dues from which the donee was to be exempted, those reserved by the king and those transferred to him. Finally the villagers were asked to pay the customary tributes and royalties to the donee, and to render him all obedience. Thus the Khoh plates of Sarvanātha state "... you yourself shall render to these persons the offerings of the tribute of the customary royalties, taxes, gold, etc., and shall be obedient to their commands. . . . And to those kings who shall be born in our lineage—by them the grant should not be confiscated (but) should be assented to."[387] Thus the donor not only abandoned his revenues but also the right to govern the inhabitants of the villages that were granted.

The economy was freed and the private sector reigned supreme. Tax burdens were lightened. A new land equation grew: Mahipati (the ruler), Kṣetraswāmī (the landlord), Karṣaka (the farmer).[388] There was decentralisation in administration and growth of feudal (*sāmanta*) rule. The Kṣatriyas had sounded the death knell to their class by internecine warfare, the Viś were busy making money so land grants for colonisation were given by the Guptas and following them, other rulers, to Brāhmaṇas. There arose Agrahara villages—Brāhmaṇa villages without taxation and Brahmadeya villages—villages controlled by Brāhmaṇas along with administrative rights. The Brāmaṇas propagated advanced agricultural knowledge by using religious almanacs like the *pañjikās*.[389] Thus the gradual accumulation of lands into the hands of the Brāhmaṇas and others helped the growth of a class of landed aristocrats who were no other than the zamindars of the later period. Rulers, often of foreign or indigenous Ādivāsī origin, were grateful to the Brāhmaṇas who fabricated royal

genealogies for them. This sacred legitimacy helped them to acquire an aura and halo in the eyes of the credulous multitudes.

Śūdras at first resisted the ruling Brāhamaṇa elite.[390] Śūdras slowly rose to the postition of tillers and artisans. The Brāhmaṇa land-owners hired the Śūdras as tillers because as the holdings were not very large it was cheaper to employ the Śūdras as peasant ploughmen than slaves. Gradually as the Śūdras became indispensable they were granted concessions—ritual, cultural, economic, and administrative.

New ethnic groups of mixed Indian and foreign origins came into existence—Jats, Rajputs, Khatris, Kayasthas, etc. They were also given land grants for services rendered. The Jats were probably the main descendants of the republican Aryans and of Hūṇas, Gurjaras, Śakas, and Ādivāsīs. They were originally probably called "Jāṭa," i.e., bound together in compact tribes. The Rajputs also had similar origins and the vacant Kṣatriya position was taken up by these new strong armed partly ci-devant barbarians. They, however, became apt and willing pupils of the Brāhmaṇas who again fabricated genealogies for them which gave them the sacred legitimacy to rule. The Aryan Viś who had became Kṣetraswāmīs now became the Khatrīs. The Kāyasthas were an administrative caste of mixed origin formed during this era. Thus the social stratification slowly began to resemble that of today. Further details about such class formation lies outside the scope of the work.

This study thus clearly indicates the Kṣatriya's rise to power and their decline due to their own "laissez faire" policies.

References

1. *Atharvaveda,* 8.10.24.
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Chapter 7

Religion

Religious Life

The seventh and sixth centuries BC have been marked by great religious upheavals encompassing novel experiments in spiritualism and profound changes in the social milieu. In India there were so many changes and developments in religion during this time that it marked a real turning point in the spiritual and intellectual life of the land. Such typical aspects of Indian religion as the doctrines of transmigration and non-violence, organised asceticism, mystical gnosis in search of release (*mokṣa*) from the cycle of birth and death, and many lesser features of Hinduism, not to mention the rise of heterodoxies such as Buddhism and Jainism were some of the special elements of this period. There seemed to be a growing discontent against the formalised religion of the Brāhmaṇas. India was not the only country facing these intellectual currents of the time. There was the growth of Confucian philosophy in China, the sweeping reforms of Zoroaster in Iran. The age of exploration in prophecy and philosophy can be well summed up by Karl Jaspers's phrase "the axial period."[1]

The entry of the Aryans into India took place not in a concerted invasion but in successive waves over several centuries, in the earlier half of the second millennium BC. It was when they had settled in the Panjab that their seers, *ṛṣis* began to compose the many hymns that were later collected in the *Ṛgveda*.[2] The Aryans whom we meet in the early Vedic period were nomads who were always at the mercy of nature. Any natural phenomenon which was beyond their comprehension was probably explained by attributting to it spiritual and mystical qualities. Thus their gods symbolized the cosmic forces and we come across Sūrya, the Sun-god, Vāyu, the Wind-god, Agni, the Fire-god, Varuṇa, the Ocean-god, Yama, the god of Death, and

Indra, the lord of the heavens. "The poets had created their individual personalities and they were pre-eminently gods of the warrior aristocracy."[3] The hymns vary widely in style and content. Most of them are in praise of gods, the most popular of whom is Indra, god of War and Weather who had about 250 hymns in his honour followed by Agni, the Fire-god with approximately 200 hymns.[4] The hymns are addressed to a pantheon of gods with no very definite hierarchy. It seems that whatever god was being praised at the time was treated as though he was the greatest god of all. This was a form of religion which Max Müller[5] called henotheism, but not all scholars agree with this.[6]

The religion of the Aryans was far removed from simple nature worship attributed, by some earlier scholars, to primitive humans. In fact the Aryans were tough nomads and semi-nomads with a comparatively advanced technology, an elaborate sacrificial religion and class of priestly seers who were the mentors of the tribesmen and also wielded much power through their manipulation of the sacred.[7] The religion of the Aryans was oriented towards this world and the present life. The seers prayed to the gods that they might live for a hundred years, that they and their patrons might be rich and own thousands of cattle. But with the last book of the *Ṛgveda,* the tenth, a new phase of Indian religion begins, marked on the one hand by speculation, an imaginative search for a first principle, and on the other, by the expansion of sacrificial ritual and the development of a sacrificial symbolism that was the main feature of the religious life reflected in later Vedic literature.[8] "God and His worshippers do not form one solid group but confront one another as a society or political unit and a power of Nature, between which only an external relation of a contractual or commercial type can subsist."[9] This contractual relationship depended upon sacrifice for the fulfilment of communion.

Usually the Brāhmaṇas undertook to perform the sacrifices. Since caste regulations were not so stringent, we find the Kṣatriyas also sacrificing for themselves. In this connection the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* lays down only a Brāhmaṇa, a Rājanya and a Vaiśya are able to sacrifice.[10] That slowly the Brāhmaṇas were monopolising this sphere can be understood from traces of Brāhmaṇa dominance in the following passage. Prajāpati created the sacrifice then Brahmā and Kṣatra. Then the sacrifice left them and was pursued by both using their respective weapons. The Brāhmaṇa won by obtaining sacrifice. Now the Kṣatriyas asked to be part of the sacrifice. The Brāhmaṇas agreed on the condition that they would abandon their

weapons assume Brāhmaṇa ones. The Kṣatriya agreed. For this the Kṣatriya would be once consecrated when entering the sacrifice so that during it he was sanctified with the attributes of a Brāhmaṇa. After the sacrifice again libations were offered so that he could regain his Kṣatrahood.[11] The principle gaining ground was that if the sacrifices were rigidly carried out in all detail they were bound to be a source of profit and advantage because the gods cannot counteract the effect of such sacrifices. As the king became increasingly dependent on rite and magic, the power of the priests expanded and that of the people diminished. The king's powers and dignity were increased by the support of religious authority.

The word *brāhmaṇa* in the sense of a priest occurs only once in the *Ṛgveda* in a very late hymn.[12] The sacrificial priest, Ṛtvij was nevertheless a significant figure whose accurate performance of the ritual was essential for its success. Another priestly functionary was the Hotṛ, whose duty it was to intone the appropriate hymns of the *Ṛgveda* at the sacrifice. As with the sacrificing priest, he had to be very well trained, for an error in pronunciation or chant would render the entire sacrifice ineffectual. The most important of priestly functionaries, however, was the Purohita ("he who is placed in the front").[13] Though the Brāhmaṇas did not form any composite body challenging temporal authority, through the Purohita they were slowly making their presence felt in the political scene. The Purothita was considered half the self of the king and the sacrifice of the king was not accepted by the gods if he had no Purohita.[14] The Purohita performed big and expensive sacrifices for the kings to avert bad omens and misfortunes.[15] The Brāhmaṇas came to be regarded as the embodiment of the will of the Creator because they claimed special intuitive wisdom and practical knowledge needed for the sacrifice. They almost assumed the position of human gods.[16] As the Brāhmaṇas succeeded in making the sacrificial rituals more complex, further texts were composed to explain its mysteries and symbolism. All, as far as we can tell, were orally composed and transmitted. These texts were called the Brāhmaṇas. The word *brāhmaṇa* originally meant magical force, especially the supernatural power inherent in certain utterances.[17]

A Hindu of today cannot conceive of religion without temples, but did our ancestors also build magnificent temples to appease the gods? We do not have any references to such homes of the gods. Therefore it may be presumed as Rhys Davids[18] does that there were no temples and probably no images. Each time probably a new altar was put up for each sacrifice in

a field or a garden owned by the sacrificer. Even during the epic age it is only in the didactic epics that we find mention of deities and temples. In fact we find Yudhiṣṭhira, having risen early, bathed and adorned himself with garlands and sandalwood paste before offering prayers to the sacrificial fire. After worshipping with purified wood and mantras he emerged from the chamber and distributed wealth among the Brāhmaṇas.[19] Almost a similar ritual was followed by Draupadī as well when she worshipped the Sun and the Fire.[20] Arjuna also performed many fire-sacrifices during his exile.[21] Thus the main interest of the Kṣatriya religion seems to be centred round the constantly burning sacrificial fire. All religious ceremonies were performed near the fire.[22] There are mention of words like "Devāyatana" or "Devatāyatana," Devasthāna and Devagṛaha,[23] but how far they represent built temples is still a matter of debate. The references like a Śūdra building a "Devatāyatāni" in the depth of the forest[24] or Hiḍimba taking Bhīma to a Devatāyatana[25] make one doubt whether they were elaborate structures. Probably the reference found in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of an Āyatana of a god or Devagara and the Devatāyatana of the Kuru kings were stable buildings.[26]

We find sacred groves of trees dedicated to and at times considered abodes of gods both in the Jātakas and the *Mahābhārata*. Prince Brahmadatta on his way saw a crowd gahered together at a holy banyan tree invoking the fairy who had been reborn in that tree to bless them with progeny, honour and wealth each according to his heart's wish. Alighting from his chariot, the prince also offered perfumes and flowers; sprinkled water on the tree and paced reverently round the tree. . . . From then onwards, the prince made similar journeys from time to time to the tree and worshipped it like a true believer in "gods."[27]

Usually the holy and sacred trees are described as tall with very large trunk and spreading branches.

> The beautiful wishing tree (also called the Mukkhakā) with straight trunks and spreading branches which received great favour from the king. Here dwelt one who had been a mighty deva king and had been reborn a tree sprite.[28]

In the *Mahābhārata* we find the Devāraṇyas[29] or the woods of the gods and the Caityavṛkṣas[30] or sacred trees. Often such sacred trees as described earlier were found in the hermitages and were considered beneficial to men and so deserving reverence.[31] The Brāhmaṇas point to a hierarchy in the vegetable kingdom. The banyan tree is Kṣatriya or king among trees.[32] The *aśvattha* is the emperor of trees[33] and the *palāśa* is the Brāhmaṇa.[34]

By the time of the Sūtras tree-worship had lost much of its vigour and was not so popular. Only a few instances are mentioned. The worship of a *palāśa* tree is prescribed at the Medhājanana ceremony.[35] The householder should make an offering to the Maruts on the leaves of an *aśvattha* tree because "the Maruts stood in the Aśvattha tree."[36]

Animals also featured in religious rites because it was believed that they, like men, harboured a migratory soul and possessed the same sensibility as men and the same capacity to express it. Among them the cow has been regarded as a sacred being from very early times. The *Ṛgveda* explicitly forbids cow-slaughter in the passage. "The mother of the Rudras, the daughter of Vasus, the sister of the Adityas, the navel of immortality; to the people who understand I say, 'Do not kill the guiltless cow who is Aditi'."[37] The *Atharvaveda* also reflects the same sentiment when it declares, "If a person cooks at his home the cow, whether she is sacrificed or unsacrificed, that wronger of the gods and Brāhmaṇas departs wicked from the world."[38] Thus, the cow was gaining importance. The Vedic Saṁhitās contain a number of passages which proclaim the sanctity of the cow.[39] The reverence was becoming stronger by the time of the Gṛhyasūtras an example being that the study of the Veda should be suspended in the presence of cows which have had no food.[40] Buddhism of course believed in total *ahiṁsā*. However, that this reverence to the cow was not totally adhered to by the Kṣatriyas, but we cannot deny that such ideas were slowly gaining ground. From the point of grace, vigour, majesty, and speed the horse was held in the highest esteem by the Aryans. "The horse is the most vigorous of all animals, most powerful, most blessed and most famous of all animals.[41] "The horse represents the nobility amongst animals."[42] The horse was considered to be a sacred animal when it served as the king's mascot and the God Viṣṇu incarnated himself in the form of a horse. Buddhism also had its divine horse in the person of the Bodhisattva Balāha, whose mission consisted in saving travellers in distress.[43] Various varieties of deer are mentioned. The stag especially was the symbol of strength because of its speed. The black antelope was sacred and *brahmacārins* adorned their skin as a mark of asceticism. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* Śabarī the renowned female ascetic with her matted hair (wore) a garment made of the skin of black antelope."[44] The elephant was probably the noblest of all animals, representing strength, wisdom, stability and prudence. Nandī the bull was another animal held in august esteem specially as Lord Śiva's mount. Monkeys are constantly related in popular legends. They are often

credited with prodigious feats. One such was the virtuous Hanumant, son of the Wind-god, a solar hero and a messenger[45] who flew like an arrow through space. He is celebrated in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The tiger is called the Kṣatriya among the beasts, i.e., "King of Beasts" and the lion is termed Ruler of the wild Beasts.[46] However the tiger is also a symbol of cruelty and rapacity. "The tiger is the expression of death."[47] Other animals are also mentioned which should be feared and distrusted. For example, the donkey's braying was baneful, the jackal was of ill omen, the dog was impure and base, hyenas the most treacherous, etc. There are mention of serpents and reptiles also being worshipped. The Brāhmaṇas mention varieties of serpents like the *nirdaṁśī*, i.e., devoid of the power of biting, *andhā sarpa* or the blind snake, *svaja* or the double-headed snake, etc.[48] The Sūtras inform us that people made offerings to serpents on different occasions. These offerings were more in the nature of propitiations than veneration of the snakes. Offerings were made on the full moon day of the month of Śrāvaṇa. Many *nāgins* or female serpents lived among men and were renowned for their beauty. When night fell they transformed themselves into their original snake form.[49] The *nāgas* or male serpents were associated with bringing rain. Serpents were often considered preservers and protectors of the domestic hearth. Sometimes statues were made. To propitiate them the local inhabitants offered water, a comb, perfumes or a mirror.[50] The soldiers of Alexander were mightily impressed by the serpents which were capable of sinister hissing sounds, and had eyes glittering and "as large as a Macedonian Shield."[51] Birds, because of their essential nature were considered celestial and solar. The eagle or the falcon was called the king of the birds.[52] Many other birds are also mentioned, such as the *haṁsa* or swan, sparrow, partridge, and cuckoo.[53] The common people believed in the existence of demons and goblins that were supposed to cause harm to people. Some of them were the Śaṇḍa Marka, Upavīra Droṇasa, Cyavana and others. The Aryans invoked Vedic deities such as Agni, Indra and Bṛhaspati to drive away demons and goblins.[54] Guardian spirits like the *yakṣas* were also common. They usually lived in trees and participated in everyday activities by admonishing, moralising or making predictions. People consulted them and in an unearthly sounding voice like an echo they gave their opinion, comments and often acted as arbitrators.[55]

As the years rolled on these beliefs connected with the sylvan surroundings of a primitive life continued to be an important part of the people's imagination.

However, the greatest challenge that the Kṣatriyas were facing was that their entire life was being subordinated to religious concepts. The daily life of the entire community was rigged with countless religious at times magical, acts and there was no withdrawing from it. Parallel with the increasing complexity of the sacrifice there was a growing of pessimism about the validity and permanence of life in heaven, along with the growth of ascetic practices. In this period, tribal bonds were loosened. Chiefs of tribes became kings of a certain territory and their subjects found themselves increasingly thrown into a melting pot of people which included Aryans and non-Aryans who had raised themselves to important positions in the land. Such ideas as decline from a happy golden age to a present one fraught with evil and likely to get worse, was growing.[56]

These men who opted out of society may in many cases have had psychological motives—loss of faith in the old verities, dissatisfaction with the way the world was going, ennui, weltschmerz, fear of the future. But there was also a positive side to asceticism. It was among these men, it seems that there doveloped the doctrine of *saṁsāra* and *karman* closely linked in the system of transmigration. Most forms of life were linked in this cycle of birth and death and re-birth: gods, demi-gods, human beings, animals down to the humblest worm, demons, souls in torment in the nether region. This constant passage of the soul from one body to another is known as *saṁsāra,* a term commonly used to imply "the world" in its every day material sense.[57]

It appears that the doctrine of transmigration began as a secret one, held by only a few sages. The first clear reference to transmigration occurs in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* and was associated with the great sage Yājñavalkya: "Whoever does good becomes good whoever does evil becomes evil."[58] Another text of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[59] mentions another famous sage Uddālaka Āruṇi, of the *gotra* of Gautama and his son Śvetaketu. According to Śvetaketu visited the assembly of the Pañcāla tribe. A certain chieftain named Pravāhaṇa Jaivāli a Kṣatriya, posed a number of questions: "Do you know how beings go away in different directions when they die?. . . Do you know how that world up there is not filled up by all the many souls that are constantly departing from here? Do you know how to get the Path of the Gods or the Path of the Fathers?" The father went to Jaivāli's court to learn. The Kṣatriya was at first disinclined to teach the Brāhmaṇa, but the latter asked him so politely that he agreed saying," I hope you and your ancestors won't do any harm

as a result of this. This wisdom has hitherto never been known by any Brāhmaṇa, but who could refuse you when you ask so politely?"[60]

This brief statement—over and over again caught up in the cycle of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*[61] is somewhat expanded and clarified in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* version.[62] The soul returning to earth in the rain, enters a plant, ultimately, the plant is eaten by a man or male animal, and the soul is transferred to a woman in his semen. Thus it is reborn as a living being.[63] The *Chāndogya* version adds another passage.[64]

> Those who have pleased the gods by their conduct are reborn in one of the three higher (twice-born) classes. Those whose conduct has been evil enter 'a foul and stinking womb, such as that of a bitch, a pig or an outcaste.' Small creatures like flies and worms do not enter either of the two paths, theirs is a third condition, to be born and die.[65]

This idea was utilized in a way to justify the caste system. The doctrine of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* appears again, in a much more elaborate form at the beginning of the early *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*.[66] Uddālaka learnt from Citra Gāṅgyāyani, who appears to have been another Brāhmaṇa of the Gāṅgya *gotra*.

> The souls of the dead go to the moon in the waxing half of its cycle and leave it again in its waning half. The moon asks, 'who are you?' and if the right answer is not given it returns to earth as rain. The soul has to choose whether it wishes to return or go further through the heavenly realm. Appropriate formulas are given for these journeys. The final pass word is, 'I am you.' This is only the beginning of the soul's journey. It must undergo many tests and or deals until at last it reaches the throne of the God Brahmā. Ultimately the soul identifies itself with Brahmā and is never agin reborn.[67]

These accounts of the doctrine of transmigration suggest that it began in the narrow circles of the elite, not that it was widespread among the masses before it was taken up by the higher classes. It came as a new, rare, and almost secret doctrine. The two passages suggest that it began almost simultaneously among people who did not know each other. Since it was at first a new and secret doctrine it seems hardly likely that it was inspired by the beliefs of the non-Aryan indigenous inhabitants of the Ganges valley. One can suggest only that it arose out of floating ideas which crystallised in similar form in the mind of more than one sage.[68] The date of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is about 650 BC.[69]

The doctrine of transmigration was taught by the Brāhmaṇas and filtered down to the lower orders. Another class of people who were involved in

spreading it, was that of the ascetics and mystics, who became increasingly numerous as time went on. Many of these wandered about and taught whoever wished to hear irrespective of class. In any case, by the time of the composition of the earliest scriptures of Buddhism perhaps even by the time of the Buddha himself, the doctrine was accepted by everyone in the Ganges valley, as far as we can see, except by a small sect of materialists or Epicureans led by a certain Ajita Keśakambalin who maintained that there was no life whatever after death. An undercurrent of scepticism and unbelief continued in later times in the school of thought referred to by orthodox Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina texts as Cārvāka, Lokāyata, or Nāstika.[70]

At this time the Vedic pantheon underwent a total reshuffling and re-orientation. The original nature of gods of the early Aryans now had serious rivals in the evolution of the cults of the Viṣṇu and Śiva. The identification of the sacrifice with Viṣṇu meant an ultimate identification of the sacrificer with Viṣṇu. The peculiarity of the Vedic pantheon was whenever a deity is worshipped and eulogised he or she was invoked as the supreme godhead. As the sacrificer or *yajamāna* was identified with the *yajña* or sacrifice the logical corollary was that the sacrificer became one with the supreme deity. The attainment of Viṣṇuhood or absorption in the deity of Viṣṇu was the union craved for by the sacrificer for that would guarantee his enjoying the same status after his expiry.

The Śiva cult also evolved in this fashion. Śiva is synonymous with Rudra who is connected with the natural phenomena of storm and thunder. The original view of Rudra attributed malevolent characteristics to him for he was created from all the stern elements of the gods to punish Prajāpati.[71] The *Ṛgveda* also echoes this aspect, "O Rudra, do not, out of wrath, injure our children and progeny, our people, our cows and horses, houses and pray, do not kill our men. We invoke thee with offerings."[72] By the time of the *Yajurveda* both the malevolent and benevolent aspects were outlined. Here we find Rudra as the Lord of soldiers, army and commander-in-chief. All types of fierce weapons and sharp missiles are associated with him. He holds the bow, arrow, thunderbolt and other deadly weapons. He himself is the Senāpati and Senānī, commander-in-chief.[73] Here he is almost like a quasi Kṣatriya. In his benevolent aspect or Śiva aspect, Rudra was the Lord of fields and plains, he was also the Lord of cattle. The *Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa* describes him as a hunter and Lord of wild cattle.[74] Śiva was also the Lord of directions, the Lord of paths, Lord of nourishment, Lord

of food, Lord of fields, Lord of trees, Lord of herbs, Lord of animals, of horses, Lord of commoners, Lord of assembly, of talented people, and hunters.[75] Śiva and his Rudra aspects were transcended in his all encompassing, comprehensive form which was the resolution of all contradictions. In this great synthesis they merged into one supreme deity rising above all conflicts. He became the Lord of all creation, Lord of all creatures, the source of all life and energy, the deity who manifested himself in diverse forms and whose essence permeated the whole creation through and through. This great synthesis ultimately led to the development of the Upaniṣadic view—the Vedāntic truth that every object however small is pervaded by the essence of the Supreme self.[76] The all comprehensive nature of Rudra may be used to show the evolution of the Vedic pantheon. The Gaṇapati and the Senānī aspects gave rise to the latter day Gaṇeśa and Kārtikeya deities respectively.[77]

By the time of the Sūtra period innumerable gods were included in the Vedic pantheon: Dhanvantari, Vaiśravaṇa, Anumati, Śrī, Bhadrakālī, consorts of gods such as Indrāṇī, Varunāṇī, Rudrāṇī, Lakṣmī, Puṣṭī, and Kālī.[78] Gods introduced into the latest parts of the epic were Skanda, the son of Agni, Lakṣmī or Āśā the goddess of prosperity, and Durgā. Divinity came to be attributed to rivers like Gaṅgā and Sarasvatī and to mountains like Hemāvat, Mainaka, and Krauñca.[79]

The early Pāli scriptures of Buddhism perhaps referring to a period not long after the Buddha's death agree with the *Mahābhārata* and say that the most important Gods were Bralımā and Indra.Many other Vedic gods were still influential. None of the gods were omnipotent, they could be overcome by determined ascetics through intense tapes (ascetic practice) and deep meditation.[80]

In the Buddhist literature we meet many local nature spirits known as *yakṣas* and their female counterpart, the *yakṣīs*. In both Buddhist literature and the *Mahābhārata* these and epic demi-gods of another type are mentioned. They are *nāgas* and their wives *nāginīs*, i.e., strange magical serpents who dwell in a wonderful world of jewels and precious metals below the earth. The worship of the *nāgas* probably emerged from the aboriginal inhabitants of the Ganges valley.[81]

The acquisition of wealth and the strengthening of the idea of the cycle of food producing food, wherein—"the offering fitly cast in fire arises up unto the sun. From out the sun rain is produced; from rain food: living creatures thence"[82]—are often linked with the stories of heroes in Indian

mythology. Indra released the waters and sent them flowing for man's good, he won the cows. Skanda, a non-Aryan deity (the son of Śiva) is gold itself: "Gold is the powerful energy of the god of fire and was born with Kārtikeya (Skanda). Here we note the controversy about the origin or Skanda. Sidhānta portrays him as the son of Agni, while Drekmeier points to his being the son of Śiva. Rāma was probably originally a vegetation deity who, if his wife Sītā (furrow) represents the fecund earth, may be taken to symbolise the fertilising rain. In both Skanda and Rāma there appears to be a combination of non-Aryan fertility and Aryan sky gods.[83]

Along with the growth of this complexity of godheads, intricate philosophical systems and epic poetry, ritual practices, each with its own type of sorcery played a very important part. As the king became increasingly dependent on rites and magic, the power of the priest increased and that of the common man decreased. Every man is born with three debts—debt to the seers, debt to the gods and debt to the manes. The first debt is repaid by observing the vow of *brahmacarya*, the second by performing sacrifices and the third by begetting children. In this lay the embryonic concept of sacrifice which later on became the very basis of religion.

The sacrifices were usually classified under two broad heads: Nitya or obligatory and Naimittika or occasional.[84] The Nitya sacrifices were obligatory and though these might not result in any immediate or tangible result, not performing them was sure to bring disaster. The second variety of sacrifices usually related to the wish yielding sacrifices or the Kāmya. The nature of wishes ranged from as personal as for the birth of a son, to as grandiose as winning vast empires. The rewards of the sacrifices consisted both of worldly and other worldly bliss. The sacrifice came to be regarded as the greatest of all action.[85] It was the connecting link between gods and men, heaven and earth and the invisible and the visible. The perfect relationship developed: the gods seek oblations: the priests seek the sacrificial fee, and the sacrificer desires worldly prosperity and heavenly bliss. Sacrifice became "the pivot of the universe."[86]

Considering this it was natural that from cradle to death the life of an Aryan was woven with a number of rituals and rites. The Kṣatriyas were no exception to the rule. In fact the Brāhmaṇas in their quest for maintaining their superiority further complicated the complex system of sacrifices. The inherent sin in the Kṣatriya *dharma* emphasised the need for sacrifice as a necessary antidote. Besides birth, Upanayana, marriage and funeral

ceremonies the Kṣatriyas performed the five *mahāyajñas,* i.e., the sacrifice to gods, the sacrifice offered to the manes, to all beings, to men, and to Brahmā.[87] They also had to consecrate the fires with which all the religious ceremonies were to be performed.[88] Minute details about the time, procedure and maintenance of these *Gṛhyāgnis* are given by the Sūtrakāras.[89] The procedure of performing *homa*, i.e., offering of oblations into the fire also consisted of infinite details: he should sip water before he begins to perform the sacrifice after the fire had been set up on the *sthaṇḍila* (a piece of ground prepared for it), he should put fuel on it:[90] he should thrice wipe the place round the fire with his wet hand, this act being called Samūhana, etc.[91]

There was a host of periodical sacrifices like the new moon and full moon sacrifices which had to be regularly performed by the married couple. Śravaṇa or Śravaṇa *karman* probably performed due to fear of snakes: Indra *yajña*, as the name suggests, was oblations to Indra and other deities related to Indra. In fact the kings were enjoined to perform Indramaha on the occasion of which oblations of Ājya were offered to Indra: Asvayuji or Asvayujikarman probably performed for prosperity of cows, with oblations to Paśupati or Lord of cattle. Agrahāyani was perhaps the new year festival. Aṣṭakas was also probably connected with the new year. Phālguni was a sacrifice offered on the full moon day of the month of Phālguna. Caitri was an annual sacrifice performed on the full moon day of the month of Caitra.[92]

A list of special sacrifices are also found. Some of them are Caitya *yajña,* the rites connected with ploughing, Agrahāyaṇa or Nava Prasana or Nava-*yajña,* Sitā *yajña.*[93] Besides these we notice a legacy of sacrifices of the Brāhmaṇa period. Among them the special and noteworthy sacrifices were, those having a political bearing. They were the Rājasūya, the Vājapeya, and the Aśvamedha. The immediate results of these sacrifices were attainment of kingship, imperial power and paramount sovereignty respectively.[94]

All these sacrifices needed absolute accuracy of ritual. A flawless performance was necessary for the attainment or results. Even the priests were not spared, often paying the penalty by their death. This proves the difficult and onerous task of the Brāhmaṇas or priests performing them. Thus we find that the supreme importance of sacrifices and the veneration of priests were directly related. None dared to challenge the Brāhmaṇa or incur his displeasure. On the contrary, the sacrificer tried to please the

priests by paying large sums as fees or *dakṣiṇā*. The nucleus of image worship can be detected in the erection of symbolic gold images.[95] No temples were actually necessary. However, in the Sūtra period probably, we have mention of a temple when a student who observes the Mahānāmni *vrata,* is described as fasting in the forest in a temple (Devakula) or at a place where the Agnihotra is performed. Passages saying that Snātaka should pass the temples of god (Devāyatanas) with his right side turned towards them or that a girl to be chosen bride should be examined in a temple, show some very rudimentary stage of temple building.[96] In the absence of archaeological supportive date nothing can be said conclusively. There is no exhortation to worship idols in a temple. Thus in the beginning the worship of idol in a temple was not a part of the Aryan religion.[97] Stress was upon the performance of *yajñas* as a means of propitiating the gods.

There was bound to be discontent with this kind of formalised religion of sacrifices and the claims of Brāhmaṇas to spiritual superiority. The Brāhmaṇic system was insufficiently flexible to cater to the changing needs of the people especially of the rising groups. These rising groups consisted of the free peasants and farmers, the agriculturists and the rich traders. Both agiculturists and traders suffered from the constant warfare which was regularly preceded by Vedic *yajñas* and fire-sacrifice. The trader needed safe trade routes and peace for their trade to flourish. This could be satisfied only by a powerful universal monarchy that could end petty warfare and offer police services. The prevalent kingship was a powerful deterrent to surplus production and privatisation of animal, land and its produce, a necessary incentive for trade in surplus. In fact kingship was an insupportable burden for the peasantry. Cattle and other animals were requisitioned in increasing numbers for the *yajña* without payment.[98] Thus the people naturally supported any doctrine that promised to deliver them from these burdens. Buddhism was in comparison to Brāhmaṇism a much cheaper religion as it did not entail costly sacrifices at every walk of life. Besides it was more egalitarian in outlook which appealed to the sufferers of a caste ridden society. Buddhism has been also interpreted as a challenge by the second of the two power sharing castes, the Kṣatriyas, to the Brāhmaṇa claim of monopoly on admission to the ascetic orders, an attempt to recover the status the Kṣatriyas were losing.[99] This religion could be utilized by the ambitious monarchies because Buddhism preached against the superiority of one against another and raised no theocracy against royal power.

The early adherents of Buddhism were drawn from the urban patrician class and included a number of Kṣatriyas and even Brāhmaṇas. But it was the rising urban commercial class using heterodox doctrines to oppose Kṣatriya violence and arbitrariness, that became the most significant champion of Buddhism.[100] Celibacy and abstinence from holding property made the teachers more economical than the greedy Brāhmaṇa priests who expected rich gifts like elephants, cattle, gold, and land .

Jainism centred on the teachings of Vardhamāna, who was called Mahāvīra, great hero with the additional titles of Jina (conqueror) and Tīrthaṅkara (Ford Maker of the river of the world). The basic doctrine of Jainism is hylozoism—the belief that all things whatever, including fire and water, wind and earth and stones are alive. There is an infinite number of souls in Jaina doctrines: *jīvas* (lives), present in the universe, each burdened with a load of matter in varying degrees. The souls carry over their load of *karman* to the next life and find a body consistent with their *karma*.[101] Only human beings and some of the higher animals have the power to affect their own *karman*: thus they can work their way higher in the scale of existence by desciplined behaviour, designed to ensure that as little as possible of evil *karma* enters the body, and by voluntarily undertaking hardships and austerities of one kind or another, in order to get rid of the evil *karma* clouding the soul.[102]

Thus there grew a general view that anticipated by centuries, Marxist theories of the relations of religious philosophy with the prevailing class system. The concept that heterodoxies such as Buddhism and Jainism were concomitant with the rise of an influential mercantile class that gave its support to these new movements which were less expensive than orthodoxy and gave a greater place to the laity in religious activities, may be true to certain extent. But there were many other factors for the rise of these sects. Also, the idea that there were well-to-do-merchants is not wholly borne out by the evidence of early Buddhist texts.

Though many members of the middle classes supported Buddhism, it appears that the Brāhmaṇas formed the largest group of both the monks and the lay supporters of Buddhism.

This is well borne out in the analysis of the early Buddhist texts in Pāli by Uma Chakravarti.[103]

This table includes only those names for which a class reference was given.

	Monks	*Lay Supporters*
Brāhmaṇas	39	76
Kṣatriyas (Khattiyas)	23	28
Uccakulas (Vaiśyas)	23	58
Gahapati, Nīcakulas (Śūdras and Untouchables)	08	11
Paribbājakas (Other Ascetics)	08	07
Total	101	180

Besides Buddhism, a number of minor sects also came into existence as a reaction against the mechanistic character of the Brāhmaṇa ascendancy. To name a few, there was, first, the Lokāyata school, which drew heavily upon the teachings of Ajita and the doctrines preached by the Cārvākas. The movement led by Ajita Keśakambalin (Ajita of the Hair Blanket, referring perhaps to the dress of this order) rejected the immaterial and supernatural altogether and preached thoroughgoing materialism.

"Man," Ajita said, "is formed of the four elements. When he dies earth returns to the aggregate of earth, water to water, fire to fire and air to air, while his senses vanish into space. Four men with bier take up the corpse; they gossip (about the dead man) as far as the burning ground where his bones turn the colour of a dove's wing as his sacrifices end in ashes. They are fools who preach alms-giving, and those who maintain the existence (of immaterial categories) speak vain and lying nonsense. When the body dies both fool and wise alike are cut off and perish. They do not survive after death."[104]

Another reactionary sect was the Ājīvikas. Probably the implication of the term is "those ascetics who took lifelong vows," as opposed to the Buddhists whose vows could be rescinded without any sense of shame or shortcoming. Founded by Makkhali Gosāla, this sect has now completely disappeared and its scriptures have vanished with it. All knowledge is gathered from rival scriptures, therefore knowledge is fragmentary. The basic doctrine was fatalism. All phenomena and all processes in the universe were the effects of an impersonal force or power called *niyati*, and human

free will was an illusion. The course of transmigration was like every thing else, rigidly fixed, and all beings went through an enormous series of rebirths until the last *niyati* brought them to a stage where they would become Ājīvika monks and ultimately achieve salvation.[105] "All that have breath, all that are born, all that have life are without power, strength or virtue, but are developed by destiny, chance and nature and experience, joy and sorrow in the six classes (of existence). There are . . . 8,400,000 great aeons, through which fool and wise alike must take their course and make an end of sorrow. There is no (question of) bringing in ripe *karma* to fruition nor of exhausting *karman* already ripened by virtuous conduct, vows, penance, or chastity. That cannot be done. *Saṁsāra* is measured as with a bushel, with its joys and sorrows and its appointed end. It can neither be lessened nor increased, nor is there any excess or deficiency of it. Just as a ball of string, will, when thrown, unwind to its fullest length so fool and wise alike will take their course, and make an end of sorrow.[106]

With this doctrine a depressing one allowing no scope for human effort—it is not surprising they disappeared. But their leader Makkhāli Gosāla was apparently a very important figure in the spiritual life of the period around 500 BC and the Ājīvikas remained a significant element in the religious life of the Ganges plain unitil the end of the Mauryan empire (300 – 185 BC). They survived in parts of Tamil Nadu until the fourteenth century.

Among the religious sects one of the most significant one was Jainism. Mahāvīra was the most illustrious of all the Tīrthaṅkaras worshipped by the Jainas. However, the teachings of Jainism were too austere for mass appeal. The great moral was *ahiṁsā* but this non-injury was carried to an extreme degree. Taking no property from others, possessing no property of one's own and truthfulness were the other tenets. Stringent rules like not drinking water without filtering lest any life be destroyed, watching one's step in case a careless step killed some insect, even filtering the in-breath to save any life floating in the air, castigating one's own flesh was the highest form of penance.[107]

Buddhism stood between unrestrained individualistic self indulgence and individualistic preposterous ascetic punishment of the body, hence its steady rise and mass appeal.

The earliest Buddhist community taught a rather pessimistic phenomenalism and dynamism. All objects, all phenomena are composite, made up of a number of changing factors, psychological and physical. There

is no self or soul, in the sense of the personality that is constant and the same in all phenomenal changes, but a complex chain of cause and effect keeps the specious personality alive and carries it over from one life to the next. Thus Buddhism, though it rejects the existence of the soul, accepts the doctrine of rebirth.[108]

The Buddha's realisation of the four noble truths and his preaching of the eightfold path[109] give us an idea of the simplicity and unorthodoxy of the religion. Buddha accepted the existence of the caste system but did not believe in its permanence or justification. He preached without any inhibitions of caste, wealth or profession. Whatever arguments he put forth against the pretensions and orthodoxy of the Brāhmaṇic religion were in the simple language of the masses for everyone to comprehend. There were no clouding of facts behind long discourses of mysticism and explanation of lengthy rituals.

One of the most striking features was the modern view of political economy.[110] The king who merely collected taxes from a land troubled by brigands and anti-social elements was not doing his duty properly. According to the Buddha, the root of social evil was poverty and unemployment. Therfore simple draconic punishment or charity and donations could not suppress or eradicate the evil. The best way was to supply seed and food to those who lived by agriculture and cattle-breeding. Traders should be supplied with the necessary capital. The servants of the state should be paid adequately so that they do not harass the *janapadas*. All this would lead to the generation of new wealth and banditry and strife would be eradicated, leading to an environment free of fear and want. People would be happy and contented. Any surplus either in the treasury or voluntary private donations should be used in public works like digging wells and ponds and planting groves. Thus Buddhism with its message of non-violence, compassion, devotion and service ultimately leading to salvation and *nirvāṇa* posed the greatest challenge to the prevailing Brāhmaṇic religion.

Since both Buddha and Mahāvīra belonged to the Kṣatriya caste the religions preached by them have been regarded by many, as already stated, to be motivated by a desire to reassert Kṣatriya rights in an age which had seen the humbling of warriors and nobles by priests. Another interpretation offered by some is that the north-east of India, Madhyadesha being away from the Aryan heartland did not come under the total sway of Brāhmaṇism hence the warrior Aryans or Kṣatriyas continued to enjoy higher status. Whatever the reason one point is obvious that the Kṣatriyas

were actively involved in the religious upheavals that were occurring in that period.

The pinnacle of glory for the heterodox sect of Buddhism was under the patronage of Emperor Aśoka. However, its roots failed to go deep into the Indian soil because soon a revitalised Brāhmaṇism overshadowed all other religions in dialectic argument and in popular appeal. People used to the elaborate ceremonies found Buddhism perhaps too austere. The concept of *nirvāṇa* was too negative of approach for mass appeal. With the reinterpretation of the Upaniṣad and the popularisation of the idea of one soul and *mukti* or salvation, the difference between Hinduism and Buddhism narrowed. With the split in Buddhism leading to the growth of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna Buddhism there were internal controversies which could not be comprehended by the outsider. Mahāyāna Buddhism allowed idol worship and the use of *mantras* which practically made it similar to Brāhmaṇism. Despite the spread of Buddhism religious rites of certain kinds remained and society continued to be stratified. As Buddhism assumed the proportions of a great religion, it became increasingly expensive because large monastic orders had to be maintained and a large number of people were engaged in economically unproductive activities. With the demise of royal patrons like Aśoka official concessions and protection were withdrawn. All these and many more factors ultimately led to the eclipse of Buddhism and the ultimate triumph of new Brāhmaṇism.

One of the important effects of the heterodox sects in the context of Hinduism was their opposition to animal sacrifice and their support of the doctrine of *ahiṁsā*. As a result of their steady pressure, such sacrifices became less and less frequent until they disappeared altogether. Later a different form of animal sacrifice arose among the medieval sects devoted to Śiva's feminine aspect Śakti, but the old Vedic sacrifices slowly came to an end. Doubts were early raised even by the more orthodox teachers recorded in the Upaniṣads, as to the efficacy of sacrificial ritual in achieving more than temporal blessings. The heterodox teachers went further and completely condemned it. Steadily sentiment in favour of non-violence spread. As far as lay persons were concerned, acts of violence were justified only in certain circumstances, such as in self-defense, in righteous warfare and in the enforcement of laws. The motive for non-violence was not purely respect for life on a self-sacrificing ethical basis, but also enlightened self-interest. Once the doctrines of *karma* and *saṁsāra* were accepted, it was

generally agreed by orthodox and heterodox alike that acts of violence were among the most potent sources of bad *karma*, leading to very unpleasant rebirths.[111]

Our discussion of the religious scene would be incomplete without the mention of the Kṛṣṇa cult which was all things to all men and every thing to most women. In the *Mahābhārata*[112] we get numerous references to the worship of Kṛṣṇa. They call Viṣṇu the unconquerable Kṛṣṇa with conch, discus and club in his hands, Kṛṣṇa was the personal god to whom anyone could pray for succour in distress as one could not to the human teacher, Buddha.

The characteristics of this all encompassing Kṛṣṇa has been eloquently described by Kosambi as "divine and lovable infant, mischievous shepherd boy; lover of all milk maids in the herders' camp, husband of innumerable goddesses, most promiscuously virile of bed-mates; yet devoted to Rādhā alone in mystic union, and an exponent of ascetic renunciation withal; the ultimate manifestation of eternal peace, but the roughest of bullies in killing his own uncle Kaṁsa, in beheading a guest of honour like Śiśupāla at someone else's fire sacrifice, the fountainhead of morality, whose advice at crucial moments of the great battle (in which he played simultaneously the parts of *deus ex machina* and lowly chrioteer) nevertheless, ran counter to every rule of decency fair play or chivarly."[113]

The historical character of Kṛṣṇa son of Vāsudeva[114] of the Vṛṣṇi sect of the Yādava clan who became the leader of a religious movement and later on deified and styled Bhāgavata, is generally accepted. The stories about the early life of the pastoral Kṛṣṇa may have developed out of the Vedic legend about Viṣṇu called *gopa*[115] (protector of the cows) in the *Ṛgveda*. However, most of the stories about the early life of Kṛṣṇa, specially his connection with Rādhā and the *gopīs* developed because of his identification with the tribal gods of the Ābhīras[116] and other allied tribes. Kṛṣṇa was also identified with the cosmic god, Nārāyaṇa as represented in the Sūtras.[117] Kṛṣṇa's dark skin may be considered a step towards a conciliation of the Aryan with the primitive aboriginal people.[118] The earliest reference to Kṛṣṇa is probably found in the cave drawing in Mirzapur district. It shows a charioteer attacking the aborigines, who probably drew the picture—with such a discus.[119] The date was about 800 BC. Another achaeological evidence corroborating the deification of Kṛṣṇa as Bhāgavata is the Besanagar Garuḍa Pillar inscription of Heliodorous.[120] It was erected in honour of Devadeva Vasudeva by one Bhāgavata

Heliodorous son of Dion.

Kṛṣṇa was closely associated with the Kṣatriya nobility, and in his role as *avatāra*, protector of the *dharma*, we find him engaged in Kṣatriya functions. The concepts entwined with Kṛṣṇa worship appealed to the Kṣatriyas. Some reasons could for one, the justification offered for war, that bodies can be killed but not the soul which was immortal and must in any case pass from one body to another. For another, it is said that pleasure, pain and all experiences of the senses, were transitory and must be taken in stride. The wise man remained the same in pleasure and pain. The soul was eternal and did not participate in the activities of everyday life. On gaining full awareness of the eternity of the soul one rose above mundane things and realized that there was no cause for sorrow in death. Kṛṣṇa's more practical argument to Arjuna, a member of the warrior class, was that his class duty, *dharma* was to fight in a just battle. If Arjuna did not he would be an object of scorn. If he was killed he would go to heaven.

Important concepts of later Hindu thought[121] were the doctrine of the three *guṇas* or universal constituents; the system of mental and spiritual training known as yoga: and the mystic impersonal absolute, Brahmā. It was believed that all human activities should be treated as a kind of sacrifice. Ritual sacrifices offered in a selfish spirit were sacrifices in name only. All ritual must be performed in self-surrender, without attachment to the result. Kṛṣṇa the friend and adviser of the Pāṇḍavas, becomes the incarnation of Viṣṇu, the Chief God and the High God of the universe from whom all other entities including Brahmā emanated. The framework of the *Bhagavadgītā* appears to be the word of god himself not merely of a god. The opposition to Vaiṣṇava was answered thus: "The deluded world doesn't recognize me as unborn and changeless," says Kṛṣṇa. "Fools scorn me," he says else where, "cause I have taken one human form. They understand nothing of my higher nature as the great Lord of all beings."

The most important new doctrine in the *Bhagavadgītā* was *bhakti,* (devotion) to god. The concept of *bhakti* embodied the profound notion of participation in the divine, not merely the worshipping of a god at a great distance. Another novel concept was that of the *avatāra*, "Coming down," that is incarnation. Kṛṣṇa appears to be a normal human being who has been reborn several times in the normal way. Yet he is also the unborn and undying Lord of all beings, who through his supernatural power (*māyā*) has come to be in human form. "It is better," says Kṛṣṇa "to perform

one's own duty however badly, than to do another's well. It is better to die engaged in one's own duty; the duty of other men is dangerous."

We can attempt to find the chronology[122] of the *Bhagavadgītā* from certain references. Its first part suggests that it was composed at a time when the ethics of the warrior, glorifying righteous warfare and stressing the martial virtues were being questioned. This indicates that the whole of the *Bhagavadgītā* is posterior to the rise of Buddhism and Jainism in the fifth century BC and especially the time of the peace-loving Buddhist emperor Aśoka in the third century BC. It is possible that the earliest part of the text was composed before the doctrine of transmigration was fully accepted and understood, because certain verses (especially 2.13, 22 and 27) seem to be composed for the benefit of listeners who do not completely understand it. In the second phase of the text (16.8), according to our stratification, we find another verse that may be directed against Buddhists. "The world has no virtue," they (the anxious persons) say, "No basis no Lord, it has not come about through causation. It is caused by desire only." This suggests not the early Buddhists but the Mahāyānists with their doctrine of Emptiness (*śūnyatā*) which began in the early centuries.

The existence of a sect of worshippers of a god whose favourite name was Vasudeva (son of Vasudeva) but who was known as Kṛṣṇa is evident from inscriptions and others sources from the second century BC onward. These people, were called Bhāgavatas or worshippers of the Bhagavān, the Lord, a term speedily appropriated by followers of Viṣṇu and his incarnations. The coins of the Greek, Antialcidas, ruling the great North-western City of Taxila (Takṣaśilā) bear a figure which has been identified with Kṛṣṇa and brother Balarāma who was also looked on as a divinity. Heliodorus, an envoy of Antialcidas, built a fine pillar at Besnagar arond 100 BC. It may be presumed that the date of the *Bhagavadgītā* was not much later than 100 BC. The compilation of it probably took two hundred years or more.

Finally, a ratification from Greek sources about the common deities of the age would help us to understand the religious aspect in its entirety.

Megasthenes's account appears absurd and mendacious. He garbed the Indian deities with Greek mythology and historical tradition. His account of Dionyses as overrunning and followed by a wandering army of revellers, garlanded, drinking wine and full of joy to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals conformed to Greek tradition and mythology. However, the essence is akin to the features assigned in Sanskrit literature to the destroying

power of Śiva or Rudra. The revellers probably represent the Gaṇas referred to in Indian literature as his most obedient servants.[123]

Hêrakles according to Arrian,[124] was worshipped by the Soursenoi, Śūrasenas an independent people who controlled two great cities Methora (Mathura), Cleisbora (Kṛṣṇapur probably Vrindavan) and a navigable river Jobanes (Jamuna) flowed through their country. Strabo another Greek historian also mentions a few important deities, the chief among whom was Dionysos (Śiva) and Hêrakles (Kṛṣṇa).

Kosambi[125] however gives a different view with regard to Dionysos. He says Dionysos can only be the Vedic Indra whose hard drinking and hard fighting character runs berserk through the *Ṛgveda*. About Hêrakles being the Indian Kṛṣṇa he expresses no doubt. In fact he points out the "Greek hero was traditionally a matchless athlete burnt black by the sun, who had killed the Hydra (a many-headed snake like Kāliyā) and violated or wedded many nymphs." The death of Kṛṣṇa by an arrow shot at his heel is more akin to Greek stories of Achilles, showing that the peculiar death must have been due to a ritual killing.

The other Indian gods worshipped by the Indians were Zensombrios, the Ganges and the indigenous deities of the country. Zensombrios must be god Indra, as suggested by scholars, who sent down the clouds the fertilising rains without which the crops would fade, cattle would die and all created beings die.[126]

When Buddhism arose in India there was no paramount sovereign. Among the various states that flourished in the sixth century BC, four kingdoms became more famous and powerful: Magadha dominated by Bimbisāra and his son Ajātaśatru or Ajātasattu; Kosala (Oudh) ruled by Prasenjit also known as Presenajit or Pasenadi; Vatsa the territory round Kosambi near Allahabad under the suzerainty of Udayana or Udna; and Avantī the district around Ujjain under the sway of Caṇḍa Pradyota Mahāsena or just Caṇḍa Pajjota. The well-known republics were those of the Vajjians of north Bihar and the Mallas of Kuśīnāra and Pāvā. The smaller republics that carved a niche for themselves were those of that Śākyas of Kapilavastu (Kapilavatthu), the Koliyas of Devadaha and Rāmagāma, the Bhaggas (Bhargas) of Sumsumāra Hill, the Bulis of Allakappa, the Kālāmas of Kasaputta, and Moriyans of Pipphalivana.

In this political scene emerged the great Buddha with his disciples and to their credit they won a great measure of support and patronage from different royal houses; ministers, noble men, bankers, and wealthy citizens.

Thus we see that Buddhism owed much of its expansion to Buddha's ability in securing the sympathy and patronage of kings, nobles and clans who in many cases had already been supporting other religions. Though later in the field and a much younger religion, Buddhism could supplant at times the other religions, ultimately monopolising the sympathy and support of some of the magnets.[127] Our main interest here is the missionary zeal of Aśoka. However, a brief sketch of the other patrons of Buddhism will help us to appreciate better the meteoric growth of the new religion.

King Bimbisāra of the Haryaṅka dynasty was a contemporary of Buddha.[128] Bimbisāra's rule extended from around 544 BC to 493 BC. It is said that king Bimbisāra realised his five ambitions when he became king; Buddha visited his kingdom; he waited for Buddha's arrival in the capital; Buddha taught him the doctrine; and he understood it. Buddha delivered discourses[129]on the four noble truths, the Anicca and Anatta of the five *skandhas* or the constituents of the being. He also dealt extensively on the doctrine of Pratītya Samutpāda. All this impressed the king deeply and he became an ardent disciple. The king with his wife, children, royal officers and subjects offered his dedicated services to the new religion.[130]

Bimbisāra's successor Ajātaśatru (493 to 462 BC) was a follower of Devadatta but later, on the persuasion of physician Jīvaka became an ardent admirer of Buddha. This leaning towards Buddhism becomes obvious from his actions. He claimed Buddha's relics on the plea that

> the Exalted one was a Kṣatriya and so am I. I am worthy to receive a portion of the relics of the Exalted one. Over the remains of the Exalted one will I put up a sacred cairn and in their honour will I celebrate a feast.[131]

True to his words when he received a share of the relics he erected a stone stupa at Rājagaha.[132] Several Dhatucetiyas were also constructed[133] over the Buddha's relics around the capital under his regime. Several Mahāvihāras at Rājagaha were also repaired.[134] Ajātaśatru it is believed, hosted the first Buddhist council.[135]

The Jaina texts give an entirely different picture. Like Buddhism Jainism was also a new religion and needed royal patrons for gaining a strong foothold in a society dominated by Brāhmaṇical ideas. According to Jaina sources[136] Bimbisāra and Ajātaśatru were both Jainas. It is stated that Bimbisāra the lion of kings (*rājasiṁha*), visited the great ascetic Mahāvīra, the lion of homeless ascetics (*anagārasiha*), at the Maṇḍikukṣi Caitya where "the king together with his wives, servants and relations became a staunch believer in the law with a pure mind."[137]

King Pasenadi was also impressed by the great teacher at his first meeting.[138] It is recorded that King Pasenadi bowed his head at the feet of Buddha and worshipped him with kisses.[139] When Lord Buddha visited Savatthi, valuable gifts were offered to him under the instruction of Queen Mallikā. We have seen earlier that she also donated a grove in the name of Lord Buddha. The Buddhist texts record the gifts of Queen Mallikā as Asādisadāna[140] and we have permanent proof of King Pasenadi's devotion in the stone sculptures of the railing pillars of the southern gateway of the stupa at Bharhut.[141]

King Canda Pajjota also supported and patronised this new religion because we hear of Avantī as an important centre of Buddhism especially during the lifetime of Buddha.[142] Buddhism appears to have reached Vatsa country with its proselytising zeal and converted King Udena to its creed.[143] King Udena patronised the Saṁgha and regularly offered meals to them.[144]

The Gandhāra and Sauvīra kings also appear to have patronised the new religion. King Pukkusati of Gandhāra and Rudrayāna of Sauvīra were known patrons of Buddhism.

Lord Buddha hailed from the Śākya tribe and thus his attempts to propagate the Dhamma among them met with enthusiastic welcome. He made a deep impression wherever he went. In return for the help and eagerness of the people Buddha allowed the Śākyas and also the Jaṭilas who were staunch believers in the effects of past deeds to join the Saṁgha without passing the Parivāsa or the four month probationary period.[145]

Among the other tribes, Licchavis, Mallas, Bhaggas, Koliyas, Bulis of Allakappa, Moriyas of Pipphalivana, Kalamas of Keśaputta all showed veneration to Buddha. In fact Buddha's teacher Atara Kalāma belonged to the Kalāmas of Kesaputta. The Koliyas were closely associated with the Buddha's life as his mother and wife belonged to them.[146]

After the downfall of the Haryaṅka dynasty smaller kingdoms succeeded but the most important among them was the Śiśunāga dynasty. This dynasty was formed by Śiśunāga and he reigned from 413 to 395 BC. It was during the reign of his successor Kālāśoka (395-367 BC) that the Second Buddhist Council was held, which probably indicates that they favoured and patronised Buddhism.

It is believed that King Śūrasena of this dynasty extended his patronage to the monks of the four quarters for about three years and presented one hundred kinds of requisites to all the *caityas* in the world.[147]

Among the Nanda kings probably only Mahāpadma Nanda was devoted

to Buddhist ideals. He is said to have supported the monks of Kāśī for many years.[148] The other Nandas probably patronised Jainism.

The decline of the Nandas brings us to the Mauryan period which is a landmark in the history of India. Aśoka the great belonged to this dynasty and he was the greatest patron of Buddhism who ensured its proper propagation inside and out of the country. The founder of this dynasty was Candragupta Maurya, who is believed to have relinquished worldly pleasures and became a "Jaina" in his old age.[149] His successor was Bindusāra.[150] We do not find any remarkable references about his religious inclinations. There is controversy over whether he patronised the Brahmanical religion or the Buddhist sect.

Bindusāra's son Aśoka asscended the throne around 273 BC and for nearly thirty-eight years exercised a benign and godly influence over almost the whole of India. His mother was the daughter of a Brāhmaṇa living in Campā and is wife belonged to a merchant class of Vedisa.[151] This indicates that intermarriage specially among royal Kṣatriyas was an accepted norm. For many years he lived as most of the kings did in luxury, but his whole outlook on the philosophy of life changed when he achieved a tremendous victory in the Kaliṅga war but at the cost of thousands of innocent lives. Filled with remorse at the horror and cruelty of war he turned towards Buddhism for solace.

We must remember that Buddhism during that era was not merely a religious belief; it was a social and intellectual movement at many levels, influencing many aspects of society. Obviously, any statesman worth the name would have had to come to terms with it. The conversion of Aśoka to the Buddhist faith was the greatest achievement of Buddhism. The promulgation of Dhamma by Aśoka should be connected with the cultural background of the heretical tradition which[152] he had imbibed from the childhood being in contact with it.

The Buddhist literatures,[153] in their zeal to depict Aśoka as a paragon of Buddhist piety declare that Buddha prophesied:

> Aśoka as a righteous king who would erect eighty-four thousand 'Dharma Rājikas' to enshrine his relics. It is stated further that Aśoka as a king would be ruling from sea to sea, without oppression, without enforcing penalties, without the force of arms but according to the Dhamma and customary law and later in life giving up his empire, he would shear off his hair and beard, don the yellow robe, go from home into homelessness and ultimately attain the status of a Prātyeka Buddha.[154]

Though Aśoka's conversion has been dramatised, his was not an

overnight conversion for he clearly states in his inscription.[155]

> For more than two years and a half that I had been a lay disciple, Upāsaka, I had not exerted myself well. But a year, indeed for more than a year, that I visited the Saṁgha, I exerted myself greatly.

As a family the Mauryas tended to favour the heterodox sects, although they never attacked Brāhmaṇism. The impact of these sects and dissidents created rifts in the social set up. Already there were the tensions created by the status of the mercantile community, the power of the guilds in urban centres, the strain of a highly centralized political system and the sheer size of the empire. The situation thus demanded a common perspective to face all these divergent forces, something that would draw them together and give them a feeling of unity. Such a focus to be successful had to derive from the king. In seeking a group of unifying principles Aśoka concentrated on the fundamental aspects of each issue and the result was his policy of Dhamma.[156]

The word "Dhamma" has and will always intrigue and confuse translators. Etymologically it is identical with the Latin word *forma* and the way in which it came to be used as it was in India in Aśoka's time is summed up in the colloquialism "good form."[157] One cannot actually call Dhamma law for none of the various senses of the word "law" really fits the concept. It is closer to the idea of "good form," to act in accordance with established customs. It cannot be explained as religion either, but rather, as what it behaves a man of right feeling to do.[158] Over and above this, Aśoka tried to merge Dhamma with politics, thus bringing it within state control. Aśoka's Dhamma or the Law of Piety, as it is commonly called, contained the notions of respectful attention to mother and father, to teachers and preceptors, high personages and all seniors, seemly behaviour, and liberality to friends, associates, comrades and kinsmen, seemly behaviour to slaves and servants, non-slaughter of living beings and non-injury to creatures, seemly behaviour and liberality to Śramaṇas and Brāhmaṇas.[159]

For the propagation of this message Aśoka adopted a two-pronged programme[160]—moral persuasion and laying down regulations for it. By these regulations the Rajjukas and Yuktas as well as Pradesikas would undertake a quinquennial tour for the instruction of the Dhamma.[161] The Puruṣas would exhort the people and expound his teachings, and the Rajjukas instruct virtuous people.[162] The Mukhyas of many classes were

ordered to work for conformity to the Dhamma on behalf of the members of the king's family. Here Dhamma embodies the virtues of liberty, truthfulness, purity of mind, gentleness and goodness.[163] As part of a retrospect in the twenty-sixth year of his consecration Aśoka declared that his Puruṣas and Antyamahāmātras would work for the conversion of fickle persons to virtuous living, and for the enforcement of injunction about protection by piety, provision by piety and guarding by piety.[164] The Dharmamahāmātras were enjoined to provide full protection to virtuous persons. To achieve this they were to work among all sects for establishing norms for increase in virtue, to work for the welfare and happiness of the virtuous by working among various specified groups, as well as among aged and destitute persons, "beggarly Brhāmaṇas," and ascetics, slaves and servants and to protect those who were devoted to religion, against harassment and molestation.[165]

Aśoka inculcated a kind of religious syncretism based on the appreciation of the fundamental ethical values of the various faiths that arose out of the great religious movements of the preceding period, and also from the need for fostering the growth of the essence of religions (*sāravṛddhi*). All religions were to be respected. All sects deserved reverence for one reason or the other on the grounds of their common virtues like self-restraint and purity of mind. By thus acting, he said, a man exalts his own sect and does service to other sects. He further emphasized that charities should be marked by gratitude and firm devotion.[166] Aśoka justified his policy of renouncing aggressive warfare on an incipient democratic principle that Brāhmaṇas, Śramaṇas and others shared common virtues. He departed from the tradition of elevating Vedic polity and orthodox socio-religious laws. By banning animal sacrifice,[167] he gave a considerable blow to orthodox Vedism, something that the heterodox movements must have been struggling to achieve. The strength of the emperor can probably be judged from the fact that he could ban such orthodox traditions. He even prohibited such *samājas* (convivial gatherings) where eating meat was part of the entertainment.[168] He completely prohibited the slaughter of specified birds, beasts and fishes, and in general, of those which were of no use and were not eaten by men.[169] He forbade killing fishes in fish-preserves and animals in the elephant forests on certain fixed days of the year. The castration and the branding of other specified creatures were prohibited on the same days.[170] This sympathy for and protection of animal life is a typically Buddhist tenet, based on the broad principle of non-violence. As already

pointed out Aśoka did not humiliate or hold in disdain the Brāhmaṇas. Only to him the image of a Brāhmaṇa was one devoid of Vedic sacrifice. An important revolutionary change was that the office of the Purohita[171] was abolished and the propagation of Dhamma was entrusted to a select group of officials called the Dhammamahāmātras. The former privileges accorded to the Brāhmaṇa in the gradation of punishment[172] followed and accepted by most law givers and kings, was nullified.[173]

Aśoka's apparatus for implementing his ideas were either hortatory or institutional. According to the first he advocated restraint in speech and action, listening to the other's *dharma*, and avoiding self praise. In the second he appointed cadres of officials like the Dhammamahāmātras, the Stryādhyakṣamahāmātras, the Vracabhumikās and other officials for the same purpose. Stryādhyakṣamahāmātras were not an entirely novel creation, for even the Sūtra writers enjoin the king to appoint religious preachers for the benefit of the females of the royal household.

It was during Aśoka's reign that the Buddhist church underwent reorganisation, with the meeting of the Third Buddhist Council in Pāṭaliputra. Aśoka, however, abstained from mentioning it, probably as a judicious policy of projecting an image of an unattached, unbiased emperor.[174] It was during this Council that the decision to send missionaries to various parts of the subcontinent was decided.[175]

The unreserved patronage of Aśoka led to the extension of the sphere of activity of Buddhism beyond the Purātima region whose heartland was Magadha.[176] Two inscriptions are of much value in corroborating this fact: "Everything within the dominion of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the king and likewise among the frontagers such as the Colas, Pāṇḍyas, the Satiyaputras, the Keralaputras, what is (known as) Tāmraparṇi, the Greek king Antiochos and those kings who are the neighbours of that Antiochos . . . everywhere have been instituted by his Sacred and Gracious Majesty two kinds of medical treatment . . . medical treatment for man and medical treatment for beast. Medical herbs also, those wholesome for man and wholesome for beast have been caused to be imported and to be planted in all places wherever they did not exist."[177] The second inscription is more relevant, for it refers to Dharma Vijaya or moral conquest. "And what is Dharma Vijaya, Moral Conquest, is considered by his sacred Majesty the Principal conquest. And this has been repeatedly won by His Sacred Majesty both here (in his dominion) and among all the frontier peoples even to the extent of 600 *yojanas* where (are) the Yona king,

Antiochos by name and beyond that Antiochos, the four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas, and Alexander. Below the Colas, the Pāṇḍya as far as Tāmraparṇi."[178]

Thus during Aśoka's reign Buddhism expanded all over northern India and crossed the Vindhya mountains, extending its influence to Ceylon and other bordering countries.[179] Hiuen Tsang's account of Aśoka's construction of stupas was probably based upon the fact that the country was studded with Buddhist monuments e.g., in Sāñcī, Bharhut, Amarāvatī, and Sāranātha.

Thus Buddhism acquired the form of a positive menace to orthodox Vedicism, because of three main developments under the patronage of Aśoka: First and foremost, it got overwhelming political ascendancy; secondly, by adopting easier means of devotion and worship it attracted the masses and thirdly with the increasing proselytising activity it broke its confinements to become a universal faith.

As already mentioned the great emperor with his novel ideas tried to merge Dhamma and politics together to all possible extent thus bringing Dhamma within state control. Buddhism which "emphasized a broader social consciousness suited perfectly the social base of his political order."[180] Aśoka in his zeal for the spread of Buddhism overstepped the limits of the authority of the state and authority of the church. Earlier the fathers of the Buddhist church kept matters regarding internal discipline in their own hands. But now Aśoka issued orders like keeping the Saṁgha entire and for the punishment of the schismatic monk or nun with disrobing and expulsion. This order was to be conveyed by the Mahāmātras at Pāṭaliputra or, "according to another interpretation at Kauśāmbī" by the community of monks and nuns upon the highways and by lay worshippers, on every fast day. Thus we see that this was an extreme case of interference on a point of purely internal discipline.[181] The officers of the Dhamma gradually developed into a type of priesthood of Dhamma with extensive powers of interference in the lives of the people, thus to some extent defeating its own purpose.[182]

The policy of Dhamma did not succeed in India, may be, because of Aśoka's over anxiety that it be accepted, or his own weakness which led to him being obsessed with it. The Dhamma failed to provide a solution to the tensions and conflicts which was its main aim. It was too vague a solution.[183]

However it would be belittling a great effort in its sheer courage in

looking for guiding principle to soften the prevailing climate of rigidity and orthodoxy. The kings of the Maurya dynasty were enterprising. They built the mighty empire of ancient India, indeed the mightiest in the world at that time.

Royal Sacrifices

Ritual is understood sociologically as an elaboration of expressive and evaluative symbolism.[184] The sacrifice is both a useful act and an obligation. As already mentioned in the earlier sections, sacrifice is probably conceived in contractual terms as both god and men needing each other. The concept of the Puruṣasūkta[185] of the *Ṛgveda* describing the great sacrifice of the Primal Man, shows that the universe emerged from sacrifice and therefore sacrifice is fundamental to the universal process. Thus, to maintain the world in good working order and prevent its degeneration to a chaotic condition constant repetitions of that original sacrifice are necessary. Indeed the gods themselves are dependent on sacrifice. Thus in a way the Brāhmaṇas who are the only persons qualified to carry out these sacrifices are greater than gods.[186] This awareness naturally led the Brāhmaṇas to claim exaggerated powers and status higher than the kings and other members of the society.[187] Sacrifice came to be regarded as the infallible medium to attain worldly prosperity and heavenly bliss and union with the gods.

In the early ages rituals were comparatively simple and could be performed by any member of the three higher castes who had undergone proper initiation. However with the passage of time the attempt to prevent the sacred and the profane, from improper and mutually destructive contact[188] became the overriding ideal of sacrifice.

The Vedic sacrifices grew increasingly complicated and lengthy as royal ambitions swelled and priestly power battened on these lusts. A passage in the *Taittirīyasaṁhitā*[189] which proclaims that by the partial performance of a sacrifice the king attains the Viś or people, and by full performance he is ensured the kingdom or *rāṣṭra* probably portrays the growing awareness of the distinction between tribal polity and the territorial state.[190] In the course of this develompent from intra and inter tribal power contest to the great Aśvamedha or Horse sacrifice which was an expression of true sovereignty, the sacrifices assume a variety of forms and meanings. They involved the slaughter of numerous animals and consisted of series and

sequence of rites sometimes spanning over a year. Along with the Rājasūya and Vājapeya, the sacrifices were connected with kingship and paramount sovereignty. Then importance was much greater than generally allowed. "Though they have long lapsed into desuetude, their effects on political attitudes have been felt all through the history of India, and the ideas behind them survive in some measure even to the present day, especially among a few Brāhmaṇic groups in southern India."[191]

The various ceremonies of royal consecration marked the formal recognition of a nominated citizen or a prince as king by the general populace. It was only after the completion of these ceremonies that a prince became constitutionally entitled to the prerogatives and privileges of a sovereign ruler. Thus the significance both political and constitutional cannot be overemphasized.

The Rājasūya[192] which means royal consecration or investiture[193] of the king is a complex religious ceremony which includes amongst other rites the performance of a number of *yāgas* of different kinds. The main features of this sacrifice are mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas,[194] and the ritualistic details are stated in the Śrautasūtras.[195] It was thought in orthodox circles that a king who had not performed this series of rituals and rites was not a true *rājan*.[196] By performing this sacrifice the king secures for himself the benefits of all sacrificial rites and avoids all kinds of death.[197]

The Rājasūya sacrifice includes seven distinct sacrificial performances spread over a span of two years. To name them: Pavitra and Agniṣṭoma as the starting sacrifice, Abhisecanīya and Ukthya sacrifice being the consecration or anointing ceremony, the Dasapeya and Agniṣṭoma when ten priests drank *soma* juice from ten cups. After a year's interval during which monthly offerings were made, followed the Keśavapanīya or tonsure ceremony and Atirātra sacrifice: then the Vyuṣṭi-Dvirātra or two nights' ceremony, and finally the Kṣatra-dhṛti or the wielding of "royal power," and Agniṣṭoma performed a month later. All the ceremonies terminated with the Sautramaṇi and *iṣṭi*, to make amends for any excess committed in the consumption of liquor.[198]

The Rājasūya sacrifice appears to have three main stages: a number of preliminary sacrifices before the *abhiṣeka* or actual coronation being the first stage. The main stage was the *abisecanīya* day when the king was actually anointed, signifying the second stage. The third stage consisted of a number of post-coronation ceremonies. One of the important preliminary rites of the Rājasūya is the *ratna havīmṣi* when offerings were

made to diffrerent deities on successive days at the house of the jewels or the *ratnins* or king-makers.[199] These jewels were probably very actively involved in the early Vedic age and they probably represented across section of society whose approval was regarded essential. However, with hereditary kingship on the rise, the *ratnins* importance waned and ultimately the ritual became just a formality. Most of the ancient texts place the number *ratnins* at eleven.[200] The original importance and status of the *ratnins* which included such persons as the Purohita, Senānī, Grāmani, Sūta, Kṣatṛ, etc., is well expressed when they are called the limbs of the ruling power,[201] and that when they are strong and vigorous the kingdom becomes so. In another reference we find "he or she is assuredly one of the king's jewels and it is for him or her that he is thereby consecrated and him or her he makes his faithful follower."[202] Here the reference to "she" probably means the chief queen. The whole passage reflects the interdependence of the king and his *ratnas* or jewels. The dependence of the king upon special personages is further exemplified when the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* states that the *ratnins* are the "givers" as well as "takers" of the kingdom and in this position bestow the kingdom on the sacrificer.[203]

Since the Rājasūya was purely a Kṣatriya sacrifice on which the Brāhmaṇa had no right, the first recipient therefore, was probably the Senānī or Commander-in-Chief. Next, the king probably went to the Purohita and offered oblations to Bṛhaspati, the chief priest of the gods. Oblations to god Indra was probably offered by the king in the house of a *rājanya*. The identity of this *rājanya* is a matter of controversy among scholars. Jayaswal holds that he represented the king elect, but R.S. Sharma has pointed out that the assumption that he was a representative of the warrior or Kṣatriya class seems to be more reasonable.[204] Next the king worshipped Aditi in the house of the queen Mahiṣi or chief queen, for "Aditi is the Earth and she is the wife of the gods and that (queen) is the wife of that (king)."[205] The queen is included probably because no sacrament without wife could be performed. Her religious importance becomes obvious when she ascended the throne with her husband during the Vājapeya ceremony.[206] In the epics also we find references to joint coronation.[207] However, R.S. Sharma states that the Mahiṣī at whose house Aditi is offered oblation represented the goddess Earth,[208] probably indicating the significance of matriarchal elements in the later Vedic polity.

The other *ratnins* were the Sūta, Grāmani orVaiśya Grāmani, Saṁgrahitṛ, Bhāgadugha, Akṣāvāpā, Govikartana, and Palagala.

The Sūta is generally considered to have been the court minstrel or chronicler.[209] Sharma however identifies him with the wheel wright who also carried out the functions of a charioteer.[210] It was in this *ratnin*'s house that the king offered oblations to the god Varuṇa. The next *ratnin*, the Grāmani or Vaiśya Grāmani, was the head of the village or township.[211] Kṣatṛ was originally probably a chamberlain who bore the royal parasol but later came to be associated with a person of mixed caste.[212] The Saṁgrahitṛ's house was chosen to offer oblation to the Aśvins.[213] Certain Occidental scholars and R.S. Sharma consider him to be a charioteer, giving rise to the idea of two charioteers as *ratnins*.[214] K.P. Jayaswal however hints that he probably held the reigns of the royal treasury which was an important component needed to drive or carry on the duties of the state.[215] The Bhāgadugha was probably the collector of revenue.[216] The literal meaning of this word is "milcher of the share." The *Vedic Index* provides us with various other meanings as well.[217] The Akṣāvāpā was probably the officer (in) charge of state accounts.[218] The *Vedic Index* on the other hand portrays him as the dice thrower or an official dealing with the revenue collected from gambling halls.[219] This could be true because gambling was a popular pastime of the Vedic Indians. The Govikartana was another *ratnin* visited by the king. His actual professional identity is however, difficult to establish. U.N. Ghoshal calls him the chief huntsman. The literal meaning of the word is "slayer of the cows" which brings him in close proximity to hunting. Thus he may be the official who administered royal hunting. Finally we come to the *ratnin* named Pālāgala who is considered a messenger in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.[220] Jayaswal identifies him as a courier of the Śūdra caste.[221] Some scholars even relate the Pālāgala to Pālāgalī the least respected wife of the king.[222] Thus from the list it appears that it was the king-makers who slowly gained the status of *ratnins*.[223]

The fact that Kṣatriyas were gaining eminence is probably reflected in the placing of the Senānī at the top of the list of *ratnins*. The inclusion of the Mahiṣī probably endorses the queen's involvement in the political affairs. If we consider the Pālāgala as a Śūdra then we can presume that the Śūdras were not regarded totally degraded.

The *abhiṣeka* or *abhiṣecanīya* was the most significant ritual of the Rājasūya ceremony. The literal meaning of the word *abhiṣeka* is "sprinkling." The details of this ritual are found in the Brāhmaṇas,[223] while the Saṁhitās[225] contain the mantras. The ceremony of besprinkling started

with offerings to a number of deities: Savita, Agni, Soma, Varuṇa, Indra, Rudra, Mitra, and Bṛhaspati, for infusing the king with the virtues essential for his high office such as righteous energy, mastery of the household, power of speech, ruling capacity, truth and protection of the law, etc.[226] The ceremony ended with a game of dice.

The next ceremony was the collection of waters from various sources like rivers, wells, dew drops, flood,rains, seas, etc. All were mixed in a wooden vessel made of *udumvara.* The king was sprinkled with this water which was divided into four different vessels of *palāśa, udumvara, nyagrodha,* and *aśvattha*. Each source probably represented a different virtue: the river Sarasvatī stood for the gift of speech, flood for plenty, sea for domination and the pool for the loyalty of the people to the king.[227] The sprinkling was done first by the Brāhmaṇa, a relation of the king, a *Rājanya* (may be a friendly king) and a Vaiśya.[228] Later literature represents a Śūdra with the term *janya* probably meaning "a man of the hostile tribe."[229] A.L. Basham, however, points out that the king was anointed with a mixture of liquids, that included water, ghee and honey, first by the Brāhmaṇa and then by representatives of the other classes among his subjects.[230]

The consecration ceremony was like a new birth for the king elect for now he became a sovereign ruler. The king wore new clothes including new undergarments called *tārpya,* a garment made of undyed wool or *pāṇḍva*, a mantle, *adhivāsa* and a head gear of *uṣṇīṣa*. Then the king was handed a bow and three arrows symbolising probably his military strength. This sprinkling made the king lord as well as the offspring of the people.[231] The rituals raised the king to virtually divine status, at least for the duration of the sacrifice, and he emerged from it strengthened in his power, with a divine aura about him.[232]

At the time of the *abhiṣeka,* the king-elect stood on a tiger skin, as the tiger was the king of beasts. A gold plate was placed on his head and another gold plate was placed below his foot.[233] As gold symbolized prosperity and immortality, the symbolic value of the rite was that the king-elect was enclosed by the gift of immortality from both directions. While the king still remained standing on the tiger skin the announcement was made:

> Informed are ye Men! Informed is the houselord Agni! probably symbolising Brāhmaṇas; Informed is the far famed Indra! probably meaning the Rājanya or nobility; Informed are Mitra and Varuṇa, the upholders of the vow! Informed is Pūṣaṇ (the lord of wealth) symbolizing the world of cattle; Informed are Heaven

and Earth all beneficial! Informed is Aditi of great shelter![234]

Finally, the priest presenting the sacrificer to the assembled folk announced, "This is your king ye people, Soma is the King of us Brāhmaṇas."[235] Thus taking his own *varṇa* outside the pale of the king's sway.

The realtionship between the king and the earth is also well expressed here: "O Mother Earth, injure me not, nor I thee." The Earth's fear is seen in this, "Something great surely has he become now, now that he has been consecrated, I fear lest he may rend me asunder." Thus the king enters into a beautiful relation with her for a mother does not injure her son, nor does a son injure his mother.[236]

At this juncture an oath was administered to the king. This coronation oath was common to all constitutions and the king had to take to vow whether he was consecrated to a *sāmrājya, bhaujya, svarājya, vairājya, rājya, mahārājya, ādhipatya* or *sārvabhauma* monarchy.[237] The vow or *dhṛta-vratra* was administered by the priest. He addressed the new king thus:

> If you do harm, in that case all the merits acquired by you from the night of your birth to the night of your demise, your pious deeds, longevity and issue will be stolen by me.[238]

In response the king vowed,

> If I betray you or play you false may I lose the merit of all my pious deeds, religious rites, gifts, my position, life and even my progeny.[239]

We must not overlook here the fact that the oath was administered by the priest who represented society without any concern of any celestial agency. Thus it was mundane affair not a divine right.

This new king was to ascend a wooden throne first and it was declared that he must be protected like a precious treasure by the four estates of the realm.

> Ascend thou the East . . . may the spring season, the priesthood protect thee, that precious treasure. Ascend thou the South . . . may the Kṣtra protect thee, that precious treasure. Ascend thou the West . . . may the Viś protect thee, that precious treasure. Ascend thou the North . . . may the Phala protect thee, that precious treasure.[240]

As already mentioned the whole ceremony concluded with a symbolical game of dice. The game was played with five dice. If all the dice fell uniformly the thrower won. The sacred stake was usually a cow brought

by an ordinary citizen of the community. The game was played by the king with his *ratnins* or ministers.[241] In this game the king was made to win the game symbolising his victory over all castes and all regions.[242]

Another significant ceremony was chariot riding. The king alighted from the throne and put on shoes of boar skin,[243] and took a symbolic drive in a chariot drawn by four horses.[244] The king carried a bow and arrow and discharged one arrow to mark the goal of the chariot race. The significance of the single arrow is explained thus:[245] The king is a manifestation of Prajāpati, the lord of creatures. This Prajāpati is one but rules over the whole creation of many created beings, similarly the king though one rules over many. The king in the chariot went round all the directions within the sacrificial arena announcing victory of all quarters. The chariot race was followed by the king and his wife mounting the sacrificial post. This amounted to approximation with gods. Ascending the post the king said,

> We have become Prajāpati's children.[246] Thus the sacrificer attains the immortality of gods and sonship of Prajāpati showing that though kingship was of human origin it was vested with divine glory on account of the sacrificial performance.[247]

After the chariot race when he again sat on the throne a curious procedure is noted: the king was gently beaten on the back with a rod which was a symbolic sceptre of justice[248] upholding the superiority of the law to that of its protector or king.[249] However, various scholars have understood the significance of this rite differently, either taking it to mean the height of priestly power or making the king purified or unpunishable.[250] The throne itself, made of specific wood and particular measurement[251] was a symbol of royal dignity and power. "It is a symbol of dominion."[252] A tiger skin symbolic of kingship covered the throne and was also spread on the ground before the throne. When the duly sanctified king ascended the throne the priest addressed the king thus: "to thee this state, *rāṣṭra* is given for agriculture, for the common good, for prosperity and nourishment.[253] Thus the kingdom was offered as a sacred trust not for exploitation or self-aggrandisement but for promotion of peace, prosperity and the common good. The democratic ideal of kingship not withstanding the hereditary character of succesion is reflected here."[254] The maintstay of royal power is doubtless security of possession of common good.[255] When the king was seated the priest touched his chest and declared, "He hath sat down the upholder of the sacred law and order."[256] The king should speak only

what is right and do the right deed alone.[257] The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* lays down that among men the *Śrotriya* (Brāhmaṇas versed in sacred lore) and the king are the custodians of the sacred law.[258] In this passage, U.N. Ghosal discerns a distinct phase in the evolution of Vedic kingship. He observes,

> By attaching the notion of unrivalled moral greatness to the king alone with the learned Brāhmaṇa the king becomes an embodiment of the moral law being matched only by the learned Brāhmaṇa.[259]

The king should not indulge in falsehood, evil thought or deed, meanness, and malice because these pettinesses fall far below the standard of imperial dignity.

After the game of dice the ritual of passing the sacrificial wooden sword,[260] followed, signifying royal power and military strength. The sword was regarded as Indra's thunderbolt.[261] The priest gave it to the king, the king handed it to his brother who in turn passed it to the Sūta who gave it to the Grāmani who in turn passed it to a Sajāta tribesman. Every receiver became weaker than the giver. Thus here we find the king represented as weaker than the Brāhmaṇa[262] but in the actual consecration ceremony it was vice versa.[263] These contradictions can probably be explained by the fact that the king became temporarily superior during the ceremonies whereas the Brāhmaṇa was spiritually superior. The Adhvaryu and Sajāta prepared the gaming ground with the sword and the Adhvaryu won for the king a cow staked by a tribesman. The staking of the cow by the tribesman and the winning of it by the king symbolised the assertion of the royal sacrificer's dominion over the common people.[264] At the end of the coronation ceremony the representatives of the different classes offered their homage to the new king. Certain Vedic kings thus consecrated were: Janamejaya consecrated by Tura Kavaṣeya; sages Parvata and Nārada consecrated King Āmvāṣṭhya, and King Yudhāṁśrauṣṭi; Vāsiṣṭha consecrated King Sudāsa; sage Udamaya anointed King Aṅga; sage Dīrghatamā consecrated King Bharata, son of Duṣyanta and many others. Everyone of these consecrated kings conquered the earth and performed the Aśvamedha sacrifice as a mark of supreme sovereignty.[265]

The Rājasūya underwent certain changes as time rolled on. Some of the changes were, the disappearance of oath-taking, the king no longer being required to visit the homes of the *ratnins* for offering oblations. The Vājapeya sacrifice was totally forgotten. These changes were caused partly by the gradual decline of Vedic culture and partly by enhancement in the position and power of kings.[266]

The Vājapeya[267] is explained as drink of strength. *Vāja* means "strength" and *peya,* "drink," Vājapeya doubtless means the same as Annapeya, "food and drink;" he who offers Vājapeya wins food.[268] The attention to food in Indian religious theory indicates that philosophy is rooted in some basic realities of life. Food announces itself in the Black *Yajurveda* as "the first born of the divine essence." "Before the gods sprang into existence I was. I am the navel of immortality whoever bestows me on others—thereby keeps me to himself I am food. I feed on food and on its feeder."[269] The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* explains the term *vājapeya* as that through which the gods wished to obtain strength (*vājām.*)[270] The Vājapeya is of special interest in that it preserves, despite the formalism imposed upon it by including it in the Soma ritual, many traces of very popular origin.[271]

The Vājapeya sacrifice could be performed by a Kṣatriya as well as a Brāhmaṇa.[272] It could be performed by a Vaiśya too, not merely by the two upper castes. But it is also clear that the offering was connected with the attainment of high prosperity, and it may well be that it was intended to be offered by one who was a *gatacrī* or who had attained prosperity and so could aspire to the highest things.[273] This aspect is further indicated by the fact that a person who perfomed this sacrifice need not take notice of anyone who had not done so. Thus the nature of the sacrifice was attainment of victory and power by the symbolic act of winning, of being hailed as victor and being anointed. Here the reference to fertility is obvious. Also, the sun aspect of the wheel is noteworthy.

In sum, thus it becomes impossible to trace the original character of the rite. It has been hybridised by the mixture of many elements to form a general offering available to any successful person.[274] This curious position of the Vājapeya has led to some controversy regarding its status vis-à-vis the Rājasūya. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* states, "One becomes a Rājā or king by perfoming the Rājasūya sacrifice; by performing the Vājapeya one becomes a Samrāṭ." *Rājya* is of a lower order, *sāmrājya* is of a superior order. A Rājā or king longed to be an emperor, Samrāṭ. An emperor never desired to become a king.[275] In the hierarchy of kingship the position of Samrāṭ was higher than that of a Rājā or a king. Therefore if a king aspired to be an emperor he followed the process of natural ascent while the reverse would naturally be the process of descent. It has been, therefore, suggested that one should not opt for Rājasūya after having performed the Vājapeya; for that would amount to degradation as if an emperor were to become king.[276] The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* also seems to uphold the superior status

of the Vājapeya when it states that Indra attained *svarājya* (self-rule) and with it the lordship, Jyaiṣṭhya of the gods by performing the Vājapeya; among human beings he who knowing this performs the Vājapeya attains *svarājya* and becomes the chief of equals.[277] We also come across statements such as, the Rājasūya maybe performed by a king who has not yet performed the Vājapeya,[278] or, Rājasūya should follow the Agniṣṭoma, Vājapeya follows the Rājasūya, Aśvamedha follows the Vājapeya, Puruṣamedha the Aśvamedha and Sarvamedha the Puruṣamedha . . . this is the order of succession of sacrifices. Prof. A.L. Basham also says that the king who had undergone the royal consecration, Rājasūya[279] might after reigning for some years, further strengthen his kingly power by ordering the performance of the Vājapeya (drink of vitality) sacrifice. . . . In fact the Vājapeya was essentially a rejuvenation ceremony.[280]

We have already noted that the Vājapeya could be performed by both Kṣatriyas and Brāhmaṇas, "Whomsoever the Brāhmaṇas and the kings may place at their head, let him perform the Vājapeya"[281] To this list Keith adds the Vaiśyas as well. But the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* appears to uphold the view that the Vājapeya may be performed by a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya but not by a Vaiśya.[282] The *Āśvalāyana Śrautasūtrā*[283] and *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[284] give the Vājapeya the status of a preliminary sacrifice. In fact the former goes so far as to state, after performing the Vājapeya a king may perform the Rājasūya and a Brāhmaṇa the Bṛhaspatisava. The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*[285] also echoes similar feelings when it calls the Vājapeya a Samrāṭsava and the Rājasūya a Varuṇāsava. The former meant consecration to the dignity of a paramount sovereign, whereas the latter signified consecration to the universal sway wielded by Varuṇa. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* solves the problem of placing the Rājasūya lower than Vājapeya by simply identifying Bṛahaspatisava (a sacrifice similar to the Rājasūya performed for attaining supremacy by the Brāhmaṇas, with the Vājapeya and making the Vājapeya itself to be the consecration of Bṛhaspati: "What is called Bṛhaspatisava is the same as the Vājapeya."[286] Kātyāyana also effects a compromise by stating that he who performs the Vājapeya is to perform the Bṛhaspatisava for a fortnight before and after the Vājapeya.[287]

Thus we can effect a truce in the controversy over the position of the Vājapeya vis-à-vis the Rājasūya by the compromise that the Vājapeya at once stands for the temporal power of the Kṣatriyas and the spiritual lordship of the Brāhmaṇas.

The special feature of the rite began with the midday pressing, at which a warrior with seventeen arrows measured out a course for a race, marking the place where the last fell with a twig of *udumvara*. Then three horses of the sacrificer were yoked to his chariot, sixteen more chariots were yoked with four horses each and the sacrificer was victorious in a formal race, during which seventeen drums were beaten.[288] The Brāhmaṇa climbed up a post, on which was fastened a wheel of *udumvara* wood, to sing the *sāman* of the strong steeds while the wheel was turned to the right. The horses were given before and after the race as offerings to Bṛhaspati to smell and gain strength. This chariot race was known as the Ājidhāvana. The sacrificer or the *yajamāna* was allowed to carry off the palm of victory.

In the second place along with the cups of *soma*, the *neṣṭṛ* alternatively offered cups of *surā* which were purchased from a long-haired man and placed in a special place. We hear of a cup of honey as well which was probably not used for any offering or ritual but was placed in the hands of a Kṣatriya or Vaiśya competitor, probably a legacy of an older rite.

Next the sacrificer, for himself and his wife, solemnly mounted to the sun by climbing with the help of a ladder the sacrificial post which was decorated with a wheel-shaped garland of (meal) in which position he was touched by the priest or others with salt in *aśvattha* leaves. The sacrificer and his wife were declared to be the children of Prajāpati. The mantras uttered while they dismounted from the post and while the king was seated on the throne, sought for the king supreme and undisputed authority as also strength.[289] The king was sprinkled with a mixture of water, milk and seventeen other substances or as many as could be thought of, with the exception of one of which he never again ate. The rest of the mixture was used for libations called *vājaprasaviya* and the festival closed with seventeen *ujjitis* or benedictions, which could be accompanied by libations.[290] After the besprinkling ceremony the priest acclaimed the sacrificer as "all ruler and commends him to the protection of gods of whom he has become one."[291]

For sheer magnificence nothing can equal the greatest of all sacrifices, the Aśvamedha or Horse sacrifice. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* describes the Aśvamedha as the king of all sacrifices. It has also been praised as the "Ṛṣabha of all sacrifices."[292] "The universal lord of sacrifices," the "lordly sacrifice."[293] The horse sacrifice is in the ritual reckoned as *ahina*, that is a rite with more than one day on which the *soma* was pressed, in

this case three. It was an old and famous rite, which kings alone could perform, to increase their realm. There are lists of great kings of old,[294] who were consecrated and who performed the horse sacrifice. Those rulers who were not content with *rājya* and *sāmrājya* but aspired to be unrivalled paramount sovereign, or the *sārvabhauma* had to perform the Aśvamedha. A non-paramount sovereign should perform the Aśvamedha.[295] It is emphasized that one who performs the Aśvamedha conquers all the quarters; conquers the world, the priest makes him a ruler and upholder.[296] "He attains everything who performs the Aśvamedha it is the expiation of all (crimes); it is the medicine of all, i.e., universal panacea."[297] "If a *rājanya* performs the Horse sacrifice, he becomes a great fighter.[298] He acquires all kingdoms, all peoples, all the Vedas, all the gods and all the created beings."[299]

The horse chosen must be swift, in front black, behind white, and with a dark mark.[300] The horse selected to wander the world for a year was always a prime specimen for he symbolised the warrior class and the generative masculine force as well as Prajāpati whose fertilizing power had created the world.[301] The horse was ultimately sacrificed to Prajāpati at the end of the year. Originally probably it was sacrificed to the Vedic god Indra and before the horse commenced on its journey a dog symbolising the demon was killed under its feet like Indra killed Vṛtra and as the king would vanquish his own enemies.[302]

The offering usually began in the eighth or ninth of Phālguna or in summer. On that day a mess of rice was cooked for the priests and the king, his four wives, and their four hundred maidens of different ranks assembled, the king spent the night at the *gārhyapatya* fire. In the morning the horse was bound and sprinkled in standing water, a man of low class killed with a club of *sidhraka* wood a four-eyed dog and let it float on a mat under the horse. The sacrificer then enjoined, "he who will kill the horse attacks Varuṇa: away the man away the horse."[303] The horse was then led back to the fire and offerings were made of cakes to Sāvitṛ in various forms for three days. The specially chosen stallion was then released to wander at will. With him travelled one hundred other horses and a band of four hundred chosen young warriors who followed the horse wherever it went.[304] These warriors were armed with armour, with swords, arrows or sticks according to their rank as princes, warriors, sons of heralds and headmen, and sons of attendants and charioteers.[305] A hundred royal princes clad in armour, a hundred warriors armed with swords; a hundred sons of heralds and

headmen bearing quivers fitted with arrows; a hundred sons of attendants and charioteers bearing staves and a hundred exhausted worn out horses amongst which, having let loose that (sacrificial) horse they guard it.[306] This passage is important as it gives us a clear idea of the royal paraphernalia illustrating the military strength of the king. Besides we get an idea of the different classes of fighters and the weapons used by them. About the social restrictions we find that people belonging to all ranks form the complete battalion, a commingling of all the classes and acceptance of the lower classes even in a religious ceremony.

If the horse wandered beyond the bounds of the realm of the king who released him the local rulers were summoned to render homage and tribute. If the rulers refused to comply the knights and warriors following the horse gave battle.[307] If any ill befell the horse it had to be atoned for. If it died, a new horse was found and the same ceremonies repeated.[308]

During its absence the priests and the sacrificer sat on the golden thrones and various minor rites were performed.[309] When the horse returned, the king who had been celebrated with the kings of the past was from the *dīkṣā* day of the new sacrifice hailed as with the gods, and on the pressing days,proper with Prajāpati. The first pressing day fell on the full moon of Vaiśākha. There were twenty-one posts and twenty-one victims for Agni and Soma. These victims were again divided into two sets of eleven. The second pressing day was the most important. The *stotra* began with the neighting of a horse in the morning. After the *śastra* of the Hotṛ three other horses were yoked with the sacrificial horse and were driven to the bath. After the return of the horses the victim was anointed by the chief queen and one hundred and one gold pieces placed on its mane and tail. The victim was given the remains of an offering made the night before, which, if the horse did not eat was thrown into water. Then followed riddles between Brāhmaṇa and the Hotṛ, the *brahmodya*. After this the victims, in all 327 or 349 tame animals, and a large number of wild animals from the elephant to the bee, making 609 in another version, were bound to the posts. It is said that claims of a large number, especially of the wild animals, being released after the fire had been carried round them, are doubtful. Probably the excuse for this mass sacrifice was the need for a large number of animals for the festival to follow the sacrifice. The horse was covered with a garment and slain.[310] Basham however, points out that the horse was sacrificed by strangulation or suffocation.

Every sacrifice had to be performed by the sacrificer along with his

wife jointly. In the Aśvamedha also the monarch had to perform the sacrifice with the help of his queens. Not only the chief queen called Mahiṣī but all the four queens had to attend the ceremony with the retinue and equipment bespeaking their queenly status. The four wives of the king come with four hundred female attendants and a young maiden to wash the feet of the horse. [311] These attendants were different in rank and dress. Thus the chief queen Mahiṣī was attended by a hundred princesses, Rājputrī of royal family.[312] The favourite queen or Vāvātā was followed by a hundred females of royal descent *rājanya*.[313] The childless and barren wife who was naturally the neglected wife or Parivṛktā was attended by daughters of heralds, Sūta and headmen of villages, Grāmani comprising a hundred in all.[314] The fourth wife called Palagali who stood below the others in social standing was attended by a hundred females who were probably daughters of chamberlains and charioteers.[315] This passsage enlightens us regarding the constitutional status and dignity of the queens and the social hierarchy among the attendants as well. The queens decorated the horse, caressed it, lay down by its side and performed various rites connected with the sacrifice.

A feature of the Aśvamedha which has aroused considerable comment is the sexual character of one of the concluding rites: the chief queen went near the horse, both were covered with a garment and the queen united with it while the priest and the maidens, nobles and the other wives indulged in ribald dialogue.[316] This shows probably that the Aśvamedha had some of its roots in very ancient fertility rites, and its purpose was partly to ensure the productivity of the land represented by the queen.[317]

Then the horse and the other animals were cut up. The blood was cooked, the momentum offering of the ordinary ritual prepared. Before this another *brahmodya* between Hotṛ and Adhvaryu, Brāhmaṇa and Udgātṛ, sacrificer and Adhvaryu took place. The rest of the horse was then cooked and offered to Prajāpati. The blood was offered at the end of the Sviṣṭakṛt offering and also on other occasions. At the end of the second day, offerings were made, through the night of various plants.

The offering of the third day were followed by the final bath. During this a curious rite of an offering on a man's head is metioned. The fees were given in various forms. The conquered land was divided, wives of the sacrificer often demanded, the Adhvaryu probably married a daughter of the sacrificer and also obtained his fourth wife.[318] In the *Mahābhārata,* we are told that the Aśvamedha, on account of the "very large quantity of

gold that is required . . . has come to be called the sacrifice rich in gold."[319] King Yudhiṣṭhira was advised to increase the compensation to the Brāhmaṇas three times the usual, so that his merit would be tripled. The Aśvamedha is here also seen as a form of expiation for the sin the Pāṇḍavas committed by killing their cousins. The sacrifice almost appears to be a great festival: "Intoxicated and carefree men and women giving themselves up to joy were there; the sounds of drums and the blare of conches echoed across the fields. It was a spectacle that gladdened the heart." "Give that which is desired!" "Eat what you want!" Such were the words that were repeatedly heard both day and night. This sacrifice was like a great feast, full of joyous and contented men. Finally, after wealth had been showered in torrents, Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers were purged of all sin and he entered his capital."[320]

The meaning of the sacrifice has been a matter of controversy among scholars.[321] Some consider it an offering to Indra, some to Varuṇa, some to the Sun and some to Prajāpati.

One aspect is however clear, that is, the emphasis was on political power. The political system envisaged by the ceators of this sacrifice was probably a quasi feudal system in wich a powerful overlord received homage from a circle of less powerful subordinates. This is assumed, probably on the basis, that if any king tried to block the wanderings of the horse was defeated in the ensuing battle, his lands were not confiscated nor was he dethroned. The defeated king was merely expected to be present at the final ceremony to acknowledge the suzerainty of the victor. Thus the tradition of the Aśvamedha did not encorage the building of solid centralised empires. Rather, it visualised a loose federation of kingdoms under a single overlord, all virtually independent in their internal affairs.[322]

With the development of the secular countertradition of centralised authority as under the Mauryas the imperial sacrifice lapsed but was revived by the Śuṅgas. There is record of Samudra Gupta and Kumāra Gupta I having performed the Aśvamedha but under the later Guptas the practice became rare. The Colas in the eleventh century appear to have been the last to sacrifice the horse as the symbol of their suzerainty.[323] The Rājasūya was replaced by a simpler anointing ceremony, the *rājābhiṣeka* which did not involve slaughter of animals, and it eventually lost more and more favour among the Brāhmaṇa mentors of the kings.[324]

The earliest epigraphic record[325] to mention an Aśvamedha is the Ghosundi Stone inscription (first century BC) which speaks of Parāśariputra Sarvatrāta as an *Aśvamedhayaji*. The Hathibada inscription also supplies

the same information. This Sarvatrāta has been supposed to be a Kaṇva king but D.C. Sircar takes him to be a local ruler. Puṣyamitra Śuṅga is said to have performed two horse sacrifices. Several small brick inscriptions commemorating the performances of Aśvamedha sacrifices from different parts of U.P. have been unearthed.

The age of the sacrifices passed, but they left their mark on later Hinduism. Recently a few such sacrifices have been performed by a certain group of Brāhmaṇas in Maharashtra and Kerala.[326] These fairly faithfully reproduced the archaic rituals without slaughter of animals. However, the spirit behind these sacrifices is largely dead in modern Hinduism.

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Chapter 8

Conclusion

"Can you not see them trekking down the mountain passes into the unknown land below?" asks Jawaharlal Nehru. "Brave and full of the spirit of adventure, they dared to go ahead without fear of the consequences. If death came, they did not mind. They met it laughing. But they loved life and knew that the only way to enjoy life was to be fearless and not worry about defeat and disaster. For defeat and disaster have a way of keeping away from those who are not afraid. Think of them, these distant ancestors of ours marching on and on, and suddenly reaching the banks of the noble Gaṅgā, flowing majestically down to the sea. How the sight must have filled them with joy! And is it any wonder that they bowed down to her and praised her in their melodious language?"[1]

These Aryan speakers poured into India about 1,500 BC. Far back in the dim ages there lived somewhere in Central Asia, or in Southern Russia as some authorities surmise, a number of human families called Aryans. In course of time, either because there was a great increase in their population, or because their homeland was rendered uninhabitable by extreme cold they migrated southwards. Society was still unsettled. There were constant migrations in search of new lands. One of these entered India by the passes of the northwest and settled during the first few centuries in the Sapta Sindhu region which included the Punjab, the valley of Kashmir on the north, Gandhāra (Peshawar, Rawalpindi and Kabul) on the west, Rajputana on the south and the Gangetic trough on the east. At the time of their arrival, they lived a simple life. The father of the family was its head, his sons and grandsons lived with their wives and children under the same roof. Cattle was their main source of wealth, in fact, subsistence. Grain, milk and butter were the main food items, though of course there is evidence

of animal sacrifice and the eating of their flesh. The father besides being the head of the family also acted as the family priest and lighted the sacred fire and offered sacrifices. On his death, the son offered the last oblations and then continued the duties of his father. At this age also considerable importance was attached to ceremonial purity and ritual which in the later period gave birth to the idea of defilement which instigated, the ramification of the diverse groups into castes

The entry of these people into India brought about revolutionary changes. The earliest traces of human activity in India so far discovered go back to the second Inter-Glacial period between 4,00,000 and 2,00,000 BC.[2] There followed a long period of slow evolution resulting ultimately in the spectacular Indus Valley civilisation. This civilisation declined about the second millennium BC and had almost completely disintegrated by 1500 BC when the magnificent Aryans entered

In the evolution of Indian history, one of the most striking development was the caste system. This unique feature has received well deserved attention from scholars at home and abroad but there still remains ignorance about the different aspects of each caste, especially the Kṣatriyas. It is intriguing to watch the growth of this caste to the height of pre-eminence and then almost a complete disappearance between the period dating 600 BC to 186 BC. It would be a half truth to generalise that Indian society has always been a dogmatic caste-ridden society where only the Brāhmaṇas have dominated. Our study reveals that whatever the orthodox writers may want us to believe there was harmony and sharing of responsibility by every section. It may be interesting to consider the high-sounding claims of the Brāhmaṇas in a different light, that in fact they betray their precarious position before the political power. This monograph reveals that the Kṣatriyas were actively involved and rose to the zenith in all the different spheres—political, social, economic, and religious.

To get an insight into the real and true picture of the age, we have relied on various sources, literary, archaeological and numismatic to name a few important ones. The human essence of India shines through the great mass of stories, treatises and philosophical texts which her ancient civilisation has handed down to us. Though much of the archaeological remains built from perishable material have disappeared whatever remains certainly helps to corroborate our sources. The numismatic evidence is most important in dating, knowing the name of the king and or dynasty, and, last but not

least, understanding the economic condition of the country in a particular era.

The Aryans in their conquering march came into constant struggle with the aborigines and different racial elements and types of culture. The dusky natives were considered flat nosed, of unintelligible speech, worshipping no god, offering no sacrifice and following strange and repulsive customs. Thus were sown the seeds of differentiation. Long after these so-called *dasyus* or aborigines were conquered and subdued the distinction between the conquerors and the conquered endured.

The division of mankind into groups based on fundamental differences in disposition, capactiy and character is a common feature of society all over the world. Such groups have a tendency to isolate themselves into separate classes holding intercourse chiefly among themselves. India also witnessed such segmentation but with a difference. The caste distinctions postulated hereditary orders functioning within rigidly circumscribed spheres of social intercourse and yet sharing the larger life of the community. It included an elaborate code of ceremonial purity and defilement, unapproachability and untouchability, commensal restrictions and connubial prohibitions, penance and excommunication.

For the Aryans it was impossible to stall the forces of change. Year after year witnessed a confusion in the social order necessitating safeguards for the maintenance of the purity of the race and the preservation of the ancient tradition. After they had settled in the fertile plains of the Ganges and Jamuna the Aryans began to concentrate on learning and ruling. They came to despise anyone who plied a mere trade, and so the four castes took shape on the basis of profession.

On the performance of the elaborate religious rites and on the perpetuation of the time honoured traditions depended the prosperity, in fact the very existence of the commonwealth. The mystic and miraculous hymns had to be preserved with due emphasis on every accent rightly placed. This extraordinary knowledge had to be handed down from father to son by word of mouth. Thus there was a need for men who could specialise in the study of the texts, comprehend the symbolic meaning of the ritual, and assist in the perpetuation of this tradition. It required laborious study and detachment for worldly pursuits. Since the word was holy, holy had to be the earthly repositories of such treasure. Brāhmanahood was thus a matter of personal qualities

and attainments rather than of descent, but as priestly functions gradually became the monopoly of a single class it closed its doors to others. The ascendancy of this class was strengthened because of the Hindu's concern for personal salvation, and the conviction that such salvation could not be secured without the performance of religious rites and recitals of the Vedic formulae by the Brāhmaṇas.

The royal caste also grew in a similar manner, i.e., its growth was also need-based. In the earlier days there was no special military order as it was still the custom for all free men to bear arms whenever necessary in defence of the state. With the expansion of territory, however, a line, a demarcation had to be drawn, as the kings and nobles who ruled the people, were naturally those who carried on wars and protected their subjects and the common people followed their orders. The king's retainers, many of whom were probably related to the king, received large shares from the conquered booty and territory. It was neither possible nor necessary for them to cultivate such territory themselves. Thus slowly a separate class of fighters began to emerge. The royal families withdrew from such activities and promised the commons security in return for the supply of basic needs by them. This class of warriors and nobles came to be termed the Kṣatriyas.

The rise of this class can probably be compared with the Norman conquest of England, as the growth of a royal caste following the subjugation of a nation by foreigners. The Kṣatriyas included not only the members of the royal houses and their kinsmen and nobles but also royal military vassals and feudal chiefs corresponding practically to the barons of early English history.[3]

The general mass came to be denoted by their ancient name Viś or Viśa (people). They in fact came to represent the third division of society, the Vaiśyas. This group was a conglomeration of different groups with different functions. Their main occupation included agriculture, pastoral pursuits and trade. This class was required to acquire knowledge about the commodities to be traded, learn different languages and to be conversant with the opportunities for business available in different countries. We, however, find mention of other professional classes as well, such as Rathakāra (chariot-maker), Takṣan (carpenter), Kulāla (potter), and Karmāra (blacksmith). All these people enjoyed a respectable status in society.

In the earlier portions of the *Ṛgveda*, we do not find mention of Śūdras as an independent class. Only in the later Puruṣasūkta hymn (hymn of the

Primordial male) do the Śūdras appear for the first time. This order was supposed to embrace all the subjugated serfs and all beyond the pale of Aryan state. To the refined Aryan the customs of the aborigines appeared obscene and loathsome. Thus at first glance individuals seem to be divided on the basis of performance of sacrament rather than race.

Whether this caste system had "already been formed," or whether it was merely in the process of formation we have no authentic proof. In fact the latest research has shown that the division of people into higher and lower groups can be traced even in the Indus Valley civilisation. In the elaborate towns of this time we find clearly different areas occupied by different groups. Already an aristocracy is seen emerging, which is subtly amassing power and beginning to call themselves the rulers.

TheVaiśyas became the basis of the organisation of state and society. The other two superior castes Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas rested on this basis: "The Vaiśya is tributary to another, to be lived on by another, and to be oppressed at will."[4] Of course all three of them were considered above the Śūdras. The Śūdra was relegated to the lowest stratum of humanity. The Śūdra is described as "The servant of another to be expelled at will" and "to be slain at will."[5] He was unfit for the ceremony of initiation, Upanayana which, when invested, became the badge of the Aryan tribe, and the newly initiated came to be regarded as born again. This constituted the main difference between the Śūdra and the other castes. All the three superior castes were considered *dvija* (twice-born), and the Śūdra was the *ekajātya* or once born. Since he was denied initiation, he was also deprived of Vedic learning. The Āpastamba declares,

> A Śūdra attempting to hear the sacred texts shall have his ears filled with molten tin or lac, if he recites the Veda, his tongue shall be cut off, and if he remembers it he shall be dismembered. If he affects a postion of equality with twice-born men, either in sitting, conversing, or going along the road, he shall receive corporal punishment.[6]

However, the Śūdras still retained their personal liberties like emigrating beyond the bounds of Aryan dominion during distress. They were not treated as bonded slaves, they were permitted to perform domestic sacrifices and *śrāddhas*.[7] Some of the Śūdras even rose to the highest position in the state even to the rank of royalty, e.g., Sālivāhana and Candragupta Maurya. Of course there is still controversy about the origin of Candragupta Maurya. It thus appears that the Śūdra's fortune vacillated according to the times.

How could myriads of people be expected to follow this division which on the one hand exalted a class to the zenith of social status and degraded another perpetually to infamy and impurity? An explanation was probably sought in the Puruṣasūkta hymn but this was probably only an illustration of the necessity of cooperation between the different parts of the body to give it vitality, as was the cooperation of the different classes necessary for the social organisation to function. There is actually nothing to warrant an assumption that the order in which the four classes are mentioned or the limbs specified as their origin denoted their social standing. Later literature however, tried to thrust this interpretation upon the hymn. Since divine origin was not a satisfactory answer to the "dispensation of Providence" a philosophy of caste was evolved in the new theory of *karma*. According to this, the status of every individual was determined by the *karma* or action of his former birth. Similarly salvation was guaranteed only on the observance of *dharma* or his obligation to do his duty to himself and to society in that station of life in which it had pleased Providence to place him. This induced the people to believe that caste was a question of capacity and character, and that the observance of caste duties or *svadharma* in the spirit of true renunciation was one's humble offering to God and this finally led to perfection and emancipation. This theory succeeded tremendously in gaining the resignation of people to their lot. Even Gautama Buddha who raised the standard of revolt against the tyranny of caste and preached the doctrine of equality of man took the help of this doctrine. His cheering message was that members of the different divisions who lived according to *dharma*, and performed the duties proper to their *varṇa* enjoyed rewards after death. If they belonged to a lower order they were reborn in excellent countries, castes and families endowed with beauty, knowledge of the Vedas, virtuous conduct, health, wealth, happiness and wisdom. Those who failed to live according to their *dharma* were reborn in degrading situations. Thus no work in itself is evil, impure. It came to be strongly believed that one is better in one's own duty though defective than another's well performed.

The result of this was trades and crafts came to be handed down in a hereditary basis. Thus specialisation developed leading to exquisite delicacy in workmanship in every sphere. The usual hereditary occupations of each caste were the Brāhmaṇas concentrated on teaching and priesthood.[8] The Kṣatriyas took up military service and administration of territory.[9] Trade, agriculture, cattle-breeding and lending money on

interest were the main occupations of the Vaiśyas.[10] Handicrafts and menial service were generally taken up by the Śūdras.[11] This division was the accepted norm for later times also. We find Kauṭilya[12] stating,

> The law laid down in this Vedic lore is beneficial, as it prescribes the respective duties of the four *varṇas* and the four stages of life.

However, the law-givers realised that in an ever changing society it could hardly be expected that social divisions would invariably coincide with economic functions,or that members of a caste would always confine themselves to the pursuits traditionally assigned to them. Therefore, they allowed certain transgressions. The twice born castes in times of distress could engage in, of course subject to limitations, the occupations of a caste inferior to their own. The *Gautama Dharmasūtra* allows Brāhmaṇas in distress to earn their livelihood through other occupations such as military service, trade and agriculture. In fact faced with starvation a Brāhmaṇa is authorised to take the work of even a Śūdra but should not mix with the Śūdras and should avoid forbidden food.[13] Vasiṣṭha also lays down similar rules when he allows that in times of distress one might resort to the avocation prescribed for the lower caste, preferably that prescribed for the caste next in status to one's own, but never that intended for the higher order.[14] The Sūtras record that the Brāhmaṇas who earn their living by singing, dancing, trade, usuary, archery, and handicrafts should not be invited to a Śrāddha feast.[15] This clearly shows that caste rules were often violated. The Jātakas also provide instances of Brāhmaṇa physicians, Brāhmaṇa traders, Brāhmaṇa hunters and trappers, and of a Kṣatriya prince as an archer, trader, labourer, and an idol-maker. Lovelorn Kuśa, a prince became an apprentice by turn under a potter, basket-maker, florist and cook.[16]

Caste regulations concerning the pursuit of occupations were based on principles of economics, personal and social hygiene and morality. The Aryans were most concerned with the purity of the race, physical, moral and spiritual. To manitain this marriage in one's own caste was the only sanctified union acknowledged by law-givers. The earlier law-givers accepted endogamy more as a guiding principle than a rigid rule. A Brāhmaṇa was allowed to select his wife from any of the four castes, a Kṣatriya from the Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra orders, the choice of a Vaiśya was restricted to the Vaiśya and Śūdra castes and a Śūdra could take his wife from his own caste alone.[17] In course of time, however, this fluidity

was restricted for fear of the higher orders being merged in the lower class. In practice, matrimonial alliances irrespective of caste restrictions continued, but the children were not allowed equal rights with those born in wedlock within the endogamous group. In particular, marriage of men of lower castes with women of higher castes was regarded with the greatest horror. The most heinous alliance was that of a Brāhmaṇa woman with a Śūdra man. The offspring of such intercaste marriages slowly came to be grouped under the broad generalisation of mixed castes thus swelling the list of castes.

A need for stability and established order, framework which will perhaps simplify and at least define, man's relationsip with the cosmos and with his fellow humans was felt. A social contract theory found in Buddhist literature points to the human origin of the Kṣatriya caste.[18]

The Kṣatriyas represented an advanced military aristocracy ruling a subject people. The mission of the invaders was threefold: to conquer, to colonise and to civilise. The Aryans were divided into tribes and each tribe had a king or chief. Most often the title was hereditary but sometimes the king was elected. The tribe was modelled on the patriarchal form of family and probably the concept of the king developed from the idea of a strong, all powerful father figure. The people gradually lost their nomadic habits and settled down in villages. These kings or chiefs of tribes of the early settlements became later on the magnificent rulers of the epic and other literature. The king had to look after his subjects and to ensure them a free, happy and prosperous existence. His duties, apart from that of protecting his subjects were not very well defined, but he had also to maintain professional priests called Purohitas to sing hymns, perform sacrifices, the commander-in-chief and the village chief. The Purohita often accompanied the king to battle to ensure victory by singing those "magical" hymns. The king received tribute from the people he conquered and also from his Aryan subjects. Whether these contributions were fixed or voluntary is not definitely known.

In the later Vedas the position of the king is more clearly defined. He became more powerful and sacred than the chief of a tribe. The origin of kingship is traced to the battle between the *devas* and the *asuras*. In this fight the *asuras* defeated the *devas*, and the *devas* said, "It is on account of us having no king that the *asuras* conquer. Let us elect a 'king.' All consented."[19] As their responsibilities increased the prestige and

importance of the king's court grew. The two epics stress the importance of men of action, i.e., the Kṣatriyas. The king being the head of military power was the chief figure in the state. He was almost always portrayed as a ruler with a sense of justice and regard for the welfare of his subjects.

The king was naturally the head of his state and according to the prescription of Kauṭilya had to be both energetic and wakeful. It would have been unthinkable in ancient India that a state should find itself without a king, for this would inevitably give rise to anarchy and an intolerable sitution, to an Indian. Obviously such a king had to possess certain qualities. Usually he belonged to the Kṣatriya caste. He was the supreme head of the army, and was supposed to be well-versed in military sciences as well as diplomacy. The *Gautama Dharmasūtra*[20] clearly states, "The king is the master of all his subjects excepting the Brāhmaṇas. His actions should conform to the norm of right conduct laid down in the scriptures and his utterances should be just and discreet. He should be well-versed in the Vedas and logic. He should be endowed with integrity, uprightness and self-control, appoint wise and virtuous persons to assist him and possess tact and resources to carry out his policy. He should be impartial to all his subjects and devote himself to their well being. With the exception of the Brāhmaṇas the subjects occupying lower seats should reverence the king sitting on a higher seat, and the Brāhmaṇas should also hold him in high esteem." The idea of king of kings also began to emerge and such terms as *adhirāja, rājādhirāja* and *ekarat* were coined. According to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, ekarat* means sole ruler of the territory up to the seas.[21]

The high standards set for a king naturally entailed an elaborate system of education. All students including the princes had to undergo rigorous training and observe the same mode of life during the course of their studies. Education usually began after the initiation ceremony. The student usually lived with his guru in the hermitage during the entire period of education. The Vedas constituted the most important part of the syllabus but contingent sciences like etymology, phonetics, grammar, literature and mathematics were also taught. The Kṣatriyas were in addition taught swordsmanship and archery, rules of battle array, carrying of the lance, jumping, running, fording rivers and similar arts besides music and dance and other plastic arts. The Kṣatriya girls also received education. Pāṇini mentions educational institutions with even hostel facility for girls. We hear of queens participating in

philosophical discussions quite convincingly. All in all the education imparted was meant to inculcate strict discipline, the moral rules of their caste and the conquering of sensuality, anger, jealousy and greed. There were several well-known universities besides the *gurukulas*. To mention a few of the celebrated universities--Takṣāśilā, Banaras and Nālandā.

The young Kṣatriya prince played a vital role. The princes included besides the sons of the king his brothers as well. The princes occupied a significant position in the administration as governors of provinces, army commanders, regents or joint rulers. History provides several examples of arrogant, recalcitrant princes becoming impatient to become king. In fact Kauṭilya warns against the dangers from such dissatisfied princes.

One of the important and neglected aspects of political history is the concept of royal succession. Under normal circumstances the eldest son of king succeeded. The system of primogeniture was prevalent. Of course this system by itself had many internal difficulties which we have discussed in detail *supra,* chap. 3, pp. 76-77ff. (description in the "Royal Succession"). This royal sucession was circumscribed by forces like the reigning king's preference, the voice of the people and popular bodies, the wishes of important ministers and feudatories, the queens' wishes and of course the intrigues of the princes themselves.

Ceremonies developed for the anointing of emperors, and sacrifices such as the Rājasūya and Aśvamedha for paramount king were undertaken. The king was the supreme head of his people, but he had to pay deep respect to his priests, and though hereditary the king had also to be confirmed by democratic election. The people's voice also played an important part in his activities. Other evidences of popular control is that conditions were imposed on the king's autocracy at his coronation. He was made to understand that his position depended a great deal on his ministers and the assemblies of the people—the Sabhā and the Samiti. These were checks on his supreme authority. The king had to take the following vow at his coronation: "If I play thee false, may I lose the merit of all my religious performances and gifts, of my good deeds, my place, my life and even my progeny."[22]

The Sabhā and the Samiti were the two earliest institutions of the Indian polity and were regarded as the twin daughters of Prajāpati. The Greeks had their Aeropagus, the Romans their Curia; and the Anglo-Saxons their

Witanagemot. Likewise the Aryans of India had their Sabhā and Samiti. They were simple political unions where men gathered together for public discussion and decision on important matters. Debating was therefore an art much cultivated and held in high esteem. There were actually prayers that "the speaker may hold the Sabhā spellbound by drawing unto himself the enlightenment and the wisdom of all its members." "That the members of the Sabhā be of one voice with the speaker," and "that the attention of all the members of the Sabhā may be riveted on one's speech, the delight of all."[23] A point was usually decided by majority vote. The Sabhā also at times acted as a court of justice. Below the king there were officers and administrators of justice. A strict code of law regulated life and society.

Some extracts from the Sūtras also throw light on the king's duty to build a town and palace for himself:

> The palace shall stand in the heart of the town.
> In front of that there shall be a hall.
> That is called the hall of invitation.
> At a little distance from the town to the south he shall cause to be built an assembly house with doors on the south and on the north sides, so that one can see what passes inside and outside.[24]

The king's duties are well summed up:

> The particular duty of a king is to protect all beings: by fulfilling it he obtains success.
> Let him appoint a domestic priest to perform the rites obligatory on the order of householders.
> Let him punish those who stray from the path of duty.
> Let him not injure trees that bear fruit and flowers.
> He may injure them in order to extend cultivation.
> Let him not take property for his own use from the inhabitants of his realm.[25]

A timetable was laid down for the king which allowed four and a half hours of sleep, three hours for bathing, meals and private study, an hour and a half for religious devotions; and an hour and a half, if the king so wished, for recreation. The remaining part of the day was devoted to affairs of state. The day began with greetings from the priest and ended with evening prayer (*sandhyā*).[26] The king's duties were many. He had to post watchmen, to supervise the revenue and expenditure, to make appointments, gather information from spies, superintend his army and stables and also follow religious precepts and study. Kauṭilya says that when in court the king "shall never cause petitioners to wait at the door" and that he should carefully

attend to the requirements of his subjects. We are also told by Greek evidence that the king "remains in court for the whole day, without allowing the business to be interrupted, even though the hour arrives when he must needs attend to his person."[27]

Thus though the government was autocratic and merciless in its precepts it was guided by the noblest ideals of beneficence, and, as Aśoka later put it, the king realised that "all men were his children." Kauṭilya says of the king: "In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness, in their welfare his welfare whatever pleases himself he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects he shall consider as good. The fatherless and orphans were provided for and women were specially protected.

During Aśoka's reign besides his personal alms-giving, he showed his benevolence in many other ways thus giving an idea of the duties of a king. Censors were appointed to supervise the distribution of royal charity and to see that animals were protected. Travellers were provided for, for a Rock Edict says: "On the roads I have had banyan trees planted to give shade to man and beast, I have had groves of mango trees planted and at every half kos I have had wells dug; rest-houses have been erected; and numerous watering places have been prepared here and there for enjoyment of man and beast."[28] Sick men and animals were looked after and the old cherished. Medicinal drugs were planted and supplied where needed, and hospitals were built as far apart as south India and western Asia. Aśoka said he should be approached by officials at any time and in any place. According to him, "Although a man do him an injury, His Majesty holds that it must be patiently borne, as far as it possibly can be borne."[29]

The king's public functions are treated not by themselves but as part and parcel of the Whole Duty Rājadharma of this personage, which, in turn, is part and parcel of the comprehensive scheme of duties enjoined by the eternal *dharma*.

What is striking is the complete silence on the doctrine of the king's divinity. The basis of the king's authority is traced to his fulfilment of the fundamental needs of the individual and the society. The king's office along with that of the Brāhmaṇas, is conceived to be one of the indispensable conditions of existence of the people and the foundation of the moral and social order. The concept of *dharma* implies that the king was governed in the whole course of his conduct by a body of rules claiming to derive their origin from the highest source, the eternal Vedas. This responsibility is well illustrated when it is declared that

the king is liable to sin for the unjust use of his power. Penitential discipline is invoked to enforce the duty of just government. The duty of protection is induced by making the king participate in the spiritual merits as well as demerits of his subjects. A more concrete basis of this obligation is, "let the king protect his subjects, receiving his pay as the sixth part." The king is represented as a paid official whose duty of protection is the natural antecedent of his collection of taxes. This is one of the most important concepts of Hindu political theory.

Kauṭilya writes in his concluding chapter that *artha* is the means of subsistence, *vṛtti* of men; it is, in other words, the earth which is filled with men. *Arthaśāstra* is the science or *śāstra* (dealing) with the mode of acquisition and protection of that (earth). We can probably trace an amplification of the concept of acquisition and protection in his concept of *daṇḍa-nīti,* which is the means of acquiring what is not gained, protecting what in gained, increasing what is protected, and bestowing the surplus upon the deserving.

During the period under review, we find that the central and local administration, home and foreign policy, civil law and art of warfare, all, had become integral parts of the political atmosphere. In the description of the seven *aṅgas* or elements of sovereignty which included the king (Svāmī), the minister (Āmātya), the territory (*janapada*), the fort (*durga*), the treasury (*koṣa*), the army (*daṇḍa*), and the ally (*mitra*), we find the Kṣatriya in the person of the monarch at the apex. However, this certainly does not preclude that he was an omniscient and self-sufficient despot, for the Āmātya is declared to be an adjuncent, albeit indispensable. The broad base of the political creed becomes obvious in the inclusion in it of the material, financial and military appliances of government. The significant and novel concept of the foreign ally is certainly striking. In describing the king as the reservoir of power—the power of good counsel (*mantraśakti*), the majesty of the king (*prabhuśakti*) and the power of energy (*utsāhaśakti*), the state is seen as a work of art, requiring for its success, the exercise of the king's mental and moral qualities.

Bhīṣma in the *Mahābhārata* also clearly states that the "state is the outcome of the desire of men for security, for a social order in which he can live in peace and enjoy the fruits of his labour and not be subject of *matsya-nyāya* or the rule of the fish, the bigger ones eating up the smaller ones. Thus, the state is the creation of human endeavour and not a creation of nature. Its sole basis is power. The state represents forth both externally

and internally. The state is seen as the maker of the epoch. The characteristics of the age, whether they be progressive, prosperous, based on social justice, reactionary, repressive or socially stagnant are results of the sovereign's action."

Here the conception of the state is one of direct activity to further progress. The state was all embracing in its activity. Only *dharma* was excluded from its purview. It was beyond the competence of the state to alter *dharma* and this operated as an effective check on what would otherwise have been a totalitarian conception. The right of the people to revolt against a sovereign who did not follow the *dharma* was expressly laid down. In the *Mahābhārata* it is laid down that a king who does not afford protection according to the *dharma* "should be slain by his combined subjects like a mad dog afflicted with rabies." Thus though the state was represented as Omnipotent with no estate to limit its activity or to resist its fiats, though the civil, political and religious rights of the individuals were not clearly stated, the general mass could never be insubordinated to a despot. The concept of justice also hindered the growth of a despot. It was believed the Daṇḍa was an aspect of Viṣṇu the protector. Daṇḍa embodied the concept of justice in order that the righteousness of the sovereign who was wide awake might not suffer extinction. Justice, thus, was what bound society together and was the great protective principle. Economic prosperity, moral welfare and cultural advancement depended on justice. Do we not see in all this the kernel of the prototype of the modern, omnipotent, administering state?

The mind of ancient India had the intuitions suiting its needs: its idea of empire was a unifying rule that respected every existing regional and communal liberty, that unnecessarily crushed out no living autonomy, that effected a synthesis of life and not a mechanical oneness. Empires disintegrated because they did not naturally and steadily evolve.

Society formally was divided on the basis of colour or *varṇa* as we have already noted. We are surrounded on all sides by Dāsa tribes. They do not perform sacrifices; they do not believe in anything; their rites are different, they are not men! O Destroyer of foes! kill them destroy the Dāsa race.[30] As the years passed, we find the Aryans sweeping on in their conquest of India until they reached the Gaṅgā valley and conquered it. But now they were no longer satisifed with territorial expansion. Life became more complex, and a new form of civilisation arose ruled by dogmatic priests and an elaborate court life. People became class conscious. Caste was defined.

Older concepts were overthrown and new ideas took root. According to Hindu philosophy the divine energy manifests itself in different degrees, depending on the preponderance in each person of one or the other of the three *guṇas*, or fundamental qualities, which make up the *prakṛti*, or nature of an individual. These *guṇas* are—*sattva*, or light which fully reveals Brāhmaṇa or the divine element within and stands for purity; *rajas* or passion, which partially veils the Brāhmaṇa within, and promotes activity; *tamas,* or darkness, which obscures the Brāhmaṇa within, and produces stolidity. In everything that springs from nature there are these three *guṇas* striving for mastery.[31] Though this concept received its final sanction in the later age the germs of it can be traced even in the *Atharvaveda*.[32] This concept regulated society to a large extent, probably, during the period under study as well.

The priest alone held the keys to learning. Self-control and self-culture enabled him to uphold the standard of purity and renunciation essential for the manifestation of the Brahmā or the divine within him. The priestly functions gradually became the monopoly of a single class. The literature of the time shows that the Brāhmaṇa advanced claim after claim to the sacrosanct privileges of his caste. Without his help even a monarch's offerings were not acceptable to the gods; not was a ruler's safety on the battlefield assured without his prayers. He added, moreover, to the king's *puṇya*, or merit. It was believed that the sixth part of the *puṇya* accumulated by a Brāhmaṇa by sacrifices and good deeds went to the credit of the ruler of the land. It was even suggested that the king ruled by the authority delegated to him by the Brāhmaṇa. Such ascendancy of the sacerdotal class was probably due to the Hindu's concern for personal salvation and his conviction that such salvation could not be secured without the performance of religious rites and recital of the Vedic formulae by the Brāhmaṇa.

The ecclesiastical order claimed pre-eminence as constituting the spiritual power of the land. The temporal power with its wealth and martial prowess challenged this pretence to superiority and demanded recognition for themselves. There were terrible feuds between the two till a policy of give and take composed their differences. It was realised that only the union of the two could uphold the order of society. The association of the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas in the sacred hymns show that the gulf separating the two classes was not so wide as those separating the commoners from the Kṣatriyas. In spite of the undercurrent of competition

both the upper castes worked in cohesion to keep the other two from rising to power.

Information about the relations between the king and the other Kṣatriyas is rather scanty. However the norms regulating the Kṣatriyas' life provide certain vital clues. The Kṣatriyas were broadly divided into two groups, namely, the nobles or the ruling class and the common soldiers. The king represented the Kṣatriya par excellence. The other members of his caste were bound to him by strong ties of allegiance. The nobles filled the king's court and some of them often rose to high an important positions. The poorer Kṣatriyas usually served in the army of the king or were attached to some noble. Certain Kṣatriyas of this rank may have sought their livelihood by following the occupations of the Vaiśya caste. Usually as common soldiers they were taken care of either by the state or by the noble in whose services they were attached. The rules of warfare for the Kṣatriyas were in the highest degree noble and humane. When not involved in military activities the Kṣatriyas enjoyed life and indulged themselves in various ways.

Though ranked higher, the Kṣatriyas at first did not draw a sharp line of difference between themselves and the commoners. They were warriors and administrators by profession, but the hand that stretched the bow and wielded the sword could also use the scythe. As the divisions hardened the Vaiśyas were however relegated to a distinctly inferior position. They slowly came closer to the Śūdras and together came to be regarded as the common people. The equation between this group and the Kṣatriyas can be aptly summed up in one sentence as the relation between the protector and the protected. In return for protection the commoners paid taxes. There can be discerned constant warnings, to the king against oppression which brings us to the concept of popular control and revolts. The royal Kṣatriyas could not entirely ignore the people inspite of being at the helm of the political system. Usually there existed a cordial relation between the two groups.

Court life generally was lived on a grand and splendid scale. The kings wore gorgeous robes and jewellery and appeared in public in a golden palanquin or mounted on an elephant. The Kṣatriyas portray a positive attitude towards pleasure and comfort. They led a varied and ostentatious life.

Festivals and diversions in which the populace participated succeeded one another round the year. Hunting was a royal sport and the king often went out on an elephant surrounded by women, some armed, and some holding the royal umbrella, the royal fan and the royal pitcher. They were

preceded by men beating drums and gongs and an escort of spearmen. Processional routes were roped off, and anyone crossing the rope was punishable by death. Gladiatorial shows were a favourite pastime and animal fights between bulls, rams, elephants an rhinoceroses were popular. There were races at which betting took place. The game of dice was one of the favourite amusements of the Kṣatriyas.

The Jātakas are replete with descriptions of the *samājas* where the king and the people participated on an equal footing. Merry-making and enjoyment of all kinds of shows were the keynote of these *samājas*.

The Kṣatriyas were fond of good food and drink. Meat was an integral part of their diet. There is a vivid description of a picnic where "cleanly cooks under the superintendence of diligent stewards, served large pieces of meat roasted on spits, and meat cooked as curries, and sauces made of tamarinds and pomegranates; young buffaloes roasted on spits dressed by dropping ghee thereon; the same fried in ghee seasoned with acids and sochel salt and sorrel leaves; large haunches of venison boiled in different ways with sorrel and mangoes, and sprinkled over with condiments; shoulders and rounds of animals dressed in ghee, well sprinkled with sea-salt and powdered black pepper, and garnished with radishes, pomegranates, lemons, sweet basil, asafoetida, ginger, and the herb"[33] were served. Of course this kind of food was not an everyday occurrence. Besides, with the growth of orthodox Brāhmaṇism and Buddhism meat-eating slowly came to be shunned. Rice, barley and other grains usually formed the staple diet.

The position of women in ancient India was free and emancipated and women were well educated and respected members of society. A wife shared all her husband's privileges and was his companion and helpmate in his activities. This freedom for women continued even after the Vedic age, and it is only when we reach the time of Manu that we find women regarded as chattels whose place is nowhere but in the home though even he allows that there they are like goddesses. Where women are honoured there the gods are pleased.[34] However, the general attitude was:

> A woman's father protects her in childhood, her husband in her youth and her sons protect her in old age; she is never fit for independence.[35]

The Vedic wife was supreme in her household and free to do what she liked. A woman could sing and play on the *vīṇā* and dance, especially on festive occasions.[36] Some could also probably read and write. We hear of Ghoṣā and Lopāmudrā who were skilled in composing hymns and in

philosophical discussions. Early marriage was not the practice and girls were able to choose their own husbands when they came to years of discretion. A father often prayed thus: "May Savitara lead and bring thee the husband whom thy heart desires."[37] It is interesting as well as informative to note that if for some reason a daughter remained unmarried, she stayed on with her parents and obtained a share of her father's property.

The epics also bear testimony to the system of *swayaṁvara* when the bride was asked to select a husband from a number of worthy suitors. A royal *swayaṁvara* was an elaborate and luxurious ceremony. Girls were expected to marry for love as expressed here.

> Many a woman is attracted by the wealth of him who seeks her. But the woman who is of gentle nature and of graceful form selects, among many, her own loved one as her husband.[38]

Though this hymn belongs to the early Vedic period many of the Kṣatriya marriages during the period under review seem to have followed the same norm. It was however usual for the wife to take a dowry to her husband, and the bride's father loaded her with ornaments and rich garments for her wedding. The standard of morality propagated was high and marriages were usually indissoluble.

The women possessed a calm philosophy and a tranquil outlook on life. They were capable of enduring with the same equanimity untold hardships or receiving the highest honours that could be paid to mortal beings. Time and again we almost hold our breaths at the extraordinary goodness of the heroines described in the epics.

Women shared the social and religious duties of their husbands. An ancient hymn which runs thus:

> O ye gods! The married couple who prepare oblations together, who purify the *soma* juice and mix it with milk, may they obtain food for their eating and come united to the sacrifice! May they never have to go in quest of food![39]

probably held true even in later times.

Widow remarriage was not common but not prohibited entirely. Childless widows are mentioned marrying their deceased husbands' brothers. Satī was not an early Indian custom. The *Ṛgveda* ordains,

> Rise up, woman; thou art lying by one whose life is gone. Become the wife of him who holds thy hand and is willing to marry thee.[40]

Even Manu's strictures did not make it obligatory for a woman to commit

satī. However, the austerities enjoined upon widows slowly made women feel life would be worthless without their husbands. This probably led to voluntary performances of *satī* which later changed into a religious custom. Woman's legal position was not very secure. She was considered her husband's property. However, certain concessions were made, specially in the case of unmarried girls and girls without brothers. The concept of *strīdhana* was prevalent but the use of the wealth was circumscribed by various restrictions.

The chief occupation of a woman was domestic. Her life revolved round her husband, looking after him, his house, his children and his needs. Surprisingly she was also in full charge of the finances and was the paymaster in her house, taking complete control of her husband's earnings. She was thrifty and intelligent financier, and even Manu assigns to her the duty of collecting and spending money and reducing expenses with a frugal hand. In the epic Draupadī was in-charge of Yudhiṣṭhira's treasury.

The treatment of girls varied according to the epoch. In general where a married couple's only child was a daughter, she could be treated as an eldest brother and enjoy the same rights as long as her descendants were still minors; however, her son was bound to the *gotra* of his maternal grandfather instead of continuing in his father's lineage, for which reason it was considered ill-advised to marry a girl, Putṛkā, "without brother."[41]

The girls were usually educated by tutors at home. However, we do have references, especially in Pāṇini's book, of girls going for extensive studies to educational institutions. They also learned various artistic accomplishments. Their mothers trained them thoroughly in the domestic arts. It is significant that the deity of learning is a woman, the goddess Sarasvatī.

The coming of age for marriage varied according to the different lawgivers. Sixteen years was the accepted norm on an average in the Jātakas, twelve according to Kauṭilya and Manu reduced it further to between eight and twelve. Brāhmaṇic theory admitted eight forms of marriage of which the first four were considered regular. Besides these four it was not considered reprehensible for a Kṣatriya to marry according to the Gandharva and Rākṣasa forms.

Polygamy was permitted in all castes, but was practised mainly by the Kṣatriyas. Its main purpose probably was to ensure male descendants who would preserve the *gotra* intact, and so the continued existence of the Śrāddha ceremony. Remarriages were not as rare as one might imagine. *Satī* or voluntary suicide was still not common among the widows. However

it was becoming fashionable among the Kṣatriyas perhaps as a consequence of polygamy.

There are lurid references to promiscuousness among women but how far they really represented the actual picture, or were simply an over dramatisation of the freedom of women, is a question still unanswered. Polyandry was not unknown. However, as is generally accepted it was probably a custom of the matrilinear Dravidians. During the period under study there was constant intermingling of the different groups in society leading to social turmoil. Thus there are bound to be discrepancies in the reports of various authors. On the whole, they were virtuous and modest, intelligent and cultivated, capable of making their husbands happy and perhaps one should not let one's opinion be clouded by such pronouncements which ascribe all the sins to womankind, claiming them to be mendacious, quarrelsome, greedy, inquisitive and capricious.

In the political sphere we do not find any significant involvement of women. However this does not mean they could be totally ignored. In the early Vedic period females were actively associated with the tribal assembly called Vidhata.[42] The *Ṛgveda* alludes to women not only attending the Vidhata but actively participating in its deliberations.[43] During the period under consideration here, women appear to have receded into the background. As queen we find her among the *ratnins*. Queens like Kaikeyī and Draupadī stand apart for their intrigues or dynamism which affected major political events.

In ancient India there was one class of women who were not bound by the rules and restrictions which limited the freedom of the high caste wives. They were the courtesans. They had unique position in society and were respected for their attributes and achievements. The association of Kṣatriyas with this class of women was not held in disgrace. The *Mahābhārata* mentions that prostitutes waited on Dhṛtarāṣṭra when Gāndhārī was pregnant.[44] They enjoyed special privileges granted to them by the state and often dictated their terms. Kauṭilya considers their profession as an important source of state income and hence enjoins total state control of this class of women.

Probably the satisfactory position of women in the early ages can be attributed to economic, political and religious factors. Since the early Aryans were busy in military and semi-military pursuits they naturally relied upon the womenfolk's cooperation in other spheres of activity. The women participated actively in agriculture[45] and in manufacture.[46] As the

forced and cheap labour of an enslaved class was not available, women had to be respected for their cooperation in various activities.

Increase of stock was an ardent necessity to keep down the numerous non-Aryans. Therefore impotence, absence or death of a husband were no bars to procreation. That is why probably Niyoga and widow remarriage was sanctioned and *satī* not encouraged.

In the religious sphere also women participated,[47] and in sacrifices often initiated[48] rites and rituals. Women also received proper education and training, therefore early marriage was not a common practice.

This position deteriorated with the establishment of Aryan rule, may be because women were no longer required to participate actively in every sphere. With the conquered indigenous masses being available for every kind of work women were withdrawn from production and hence their high status received a blow. With the increase in polygamy the dearth of Aryan woman was complemented by non-Aryan woman. Thus women further lost their need-based status. Women's identity lay in motherhood and nothing else.

The growth of the economy is evident from the progress in agriculture and pastoral pursuits. There are detailed references to agricultural operations as ploughing, sowing, reaping and threshing. The seasons meant for agriculture and the crops grown in those seasons are also mentioned. Various new and different occupations like those of fishermen, fire rangers, ploughers, washermen, barbers, messengers, jewel-makers, manufacturers of baskets, ropes, dyes, chariots and many more, came up. There is also mention of a ship of a hundred oars (*śatarita*).[49] which probably indicates some kind of maritime trade.

The emergence of the guild system can be noted here. The word *śreṣṭhi* probably signifies the headman of a guild. With the increased use of metals, especially gold, gold coins or gold itself came to be used as a medium of exchange in trade. During the Buddhist period there is specific mention of eighteen guilds which probably represents a systematic organisation of economic activities.

With the coming of the Mauryas, we notice a tremendous change in the economic sphere. There was proper categorisation of state revenue and expenditure. A host of officers were engaged to fulfil the economic duties. The *Arthaśāstra* gives us minute details regarding the economic activites. Thus we see that the Kṣatriya was emerging as a strong class in society. The institution of *dāna* in the context of social and economic

developments during the period *c.* 600 BC to 186 BC can hardly be viewed in the same restricted sense of ritualistic gift-making to religious beneficiaries, as is commonly understood today.

The term *dāna* therefore has been understood in its broadest sense of unilateral gift-making. It comprehends not only monetary endowments and gifts of various kinds of articles to members of religious orders, but also alms to beggars or needy wayfarers, the construction of *vihāras*, alms-halls, rest-houses, wells, tanks and other works of public welfare; it would also include the dedication of pleasure gardens, votive images, pillars, *caityas,* etc. which were treated as the Pitra category of *dāna* by the Brāhmaṇical law-givers. Land, both agricultural and residential, was becoming increasingly popular as an item of gift with the passage of time.

The growing size of various categories of donees, as well as the spirit of competition manifest amongst them, produced the major consequence of economically strong and quasi-independent non-Kṣatriya classes emerging, who began to challenge the supremacy of the Kṣatriyas. It became one of the major causes for the decline of the Kṣatriyas from their strategic position.

In the religious sphere also there were significant developments with which the Kṣatriyas were connected. Vedic liturgy was essentially an effort to evoke and recreate the cosmic order so as to ensure the effective functioning of society. By the later Vedic period the anthropomorphic gods of the heroic age had been eclipsed by more imposing and aloof deities, and the rituals had become a highly formalised religion with a complex ceremonialism. As religion came to be tied to technical expertise the priests strengthened their position isolating themselves from social control. The royal Kṣatriyas were convinced that they had to participate in various costly sacrifices to maintain their position in the eyes of the common people. Thus, complicated and expensive *yajñas* like the Rājasūya and Aśvamedha developed. However, the sixth century BC was a time when men's minds in several widely separated parts of the world were deeply stirred by the problems of religions and salvation. Mahāvīra and the Buddha both Kṣatriyas, in India, Isaiah in Babylon, Heraclitus and Confucius in China, all unknown to one another, were displaying a new boldness and stirring men's minds. Everywhere men were growing out of the traditions of priests and blood sacrifices, and asking the most penetrating questions. In India thus developed the two most important religious movements—Buddhism and Jainism. Both played an

important part and received royal patronage. The conversion of Aśoka to Buddhism was the most important event in the history of that religion, for this helped it to become a world religion as Aśoka sent many missionaries to different countries to preach the doctrine of Buddhism.

From the above summary it becomes clear that roughly from sixth century BC to third century BC new modes of economic production, the incorporation of indigenous people into the Aryan community and other social changes rendered the old agencies of integration inadequate; with many of the certainties of life dissolving and new social relationships demanding new justifications, men were faced with the need to re-examine basic values and institutions. A variety of ideas about the nature and destiny of human life began to challenge traditional conceptions. In this situation of turmoil the Kṣatriyas with their martial power provided some kind of stability.

The Kṣatriyas led an unrestricted life of war and pleasure. Their indolent life-style, laissez-faire behaviour in the economic sphere and constant warfare, slowly led to their downfall. The heroic Kṣatriyas bled themselves to death in the Gangetic valley. This could not but slowly benefit the non-fighting classes, the Brāhmaṇas and Vaiśyas.

> The desire for empire did not disappear but there was no longer the same compulsion and intensity with which the first of the empires had been built.[50]

The Kṣatriyas slowly disappeard from the scene. A fourth wave of white men, Greeks, Śakas, and Kuṣāṇas streamed in from the north-west. The Kuṣāṇa and Tokharians (later Dogras) contributed to the name Thakur which later applied to the Rajputs[51] who can probably be considered as the descendants of the martial Kṣatriyas.

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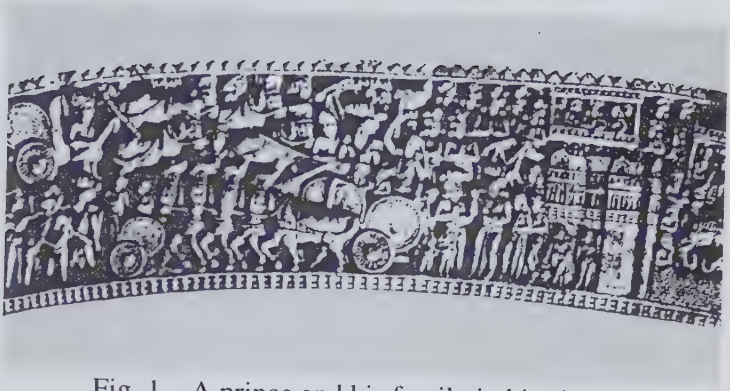

Fig. 1. A prince and his family in his chariot

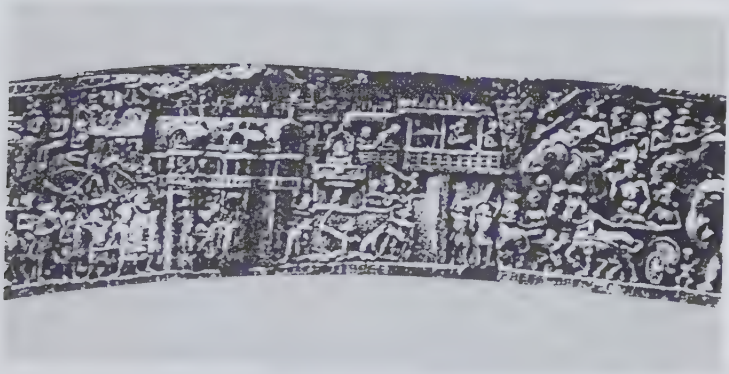

Fig. 2. The army besieging a city

Fig. 3. A prince driving in his chariot

Fig. 4. The initiation of a prince

Fig. 5. A king with attendants

Fig. 6. Life in a hermitage

Fig. 7. A jungle hermitage

Fig. 8. A caravan of carts

Fig. 9. A king being entertained

Fig. 10. The wrestlers

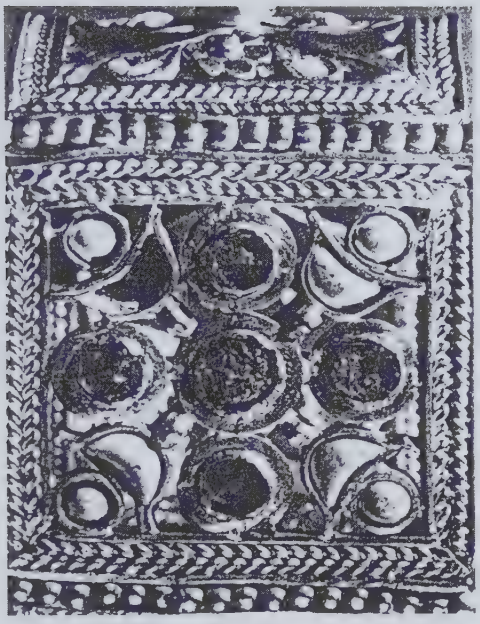

Fig. 11. A bracelet

Fig. 12. The courtesans

Fig. 13. A woman holding a vīṇā

Fig. 14. The sacred tree and worshippers

Fig. 15. The worship of the Nāga cult

Fig. 16. The sanctity of the stūpa

Fig. 17. An ascetic

Fig. 18. A woman busy with her toilet

Dr. Madhumita Chatterji, a graduate of Sophia College, Bombay University, holds a Ph.D. in History from Jadavpur University, Kolkata, and has completed a programme in History, Politics and Society from Oxford University, where she was awarded the grade of excellence. She has published papers on Indian history, Indian ethos and management. As a senior faculty in various management institutes she has been involved in research and teaching of the relevance of Indian ethos and culture in the Management Processes. Her areas of interest also include Cross Cultural Management and Business Ethics.

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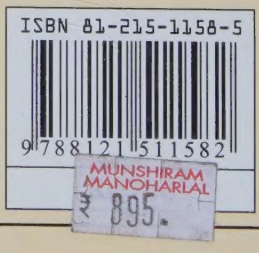
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